

‘I am the king of that table’
Ethnographic Study of the Immigrant Integration at the
Workplace

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Abstract

The Finnish Integration law is directed to support immigrants' active participation in society, support equality and interaction of different population groups with each other. In this paper I discuss that in fact it is directed to assistance in finding employment overlooking the very essential part of integration process that begins after the start of working life. The question of how integration proceeds after this point is answered through the ethnographic case study of International Corporation logistics department with the focus on immigrant and native employees' communication.

The results can be divided into two parts, firstly concerning the immigrants' precarious position, secondly, the specificity of their communication with Finnish nationals. Studying the context of the immigrant integration, I discovered that immigrants have a rather economically vulnerable position. The structure of logistics department determines the unfavourable conditions of their employment, offering only part-time job opportunities. Discrepancy between working hours set by the employment contract and those actually worked every month makes the income highly unpredictable. This inconsistency as well as hourly-based payment system put employees in a position of constant struggle to increase their income, and set the high flexibility requirement. Moreover, the welfare benefits unequal distribution is discussed as a factor of immigrant precarization.

Study of the immigrant and native employees' communication has shown the existence of boundary between them that is maintained and reinforced by the actors themselves through ascription and self-ascription processes. Immigrant employees, experiencing communication difficulties with Finnish nationals within their department and with other departments, have a detached and segregated position in the Corporation. In the context of immigrant economic and social vulnerability the full participation in the society of the host country could hardly be achieved. Recommendations were elaborated concerning defining the integration concept in official documents and concerning possible improvements in the studied corporation.

Key words:

Integration, immigrant precarity, boundary making, doing distance, group formation.

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1 Introduction

The Finnish Integration law is directed to support immigrants' active participation in society, support equality and interaction of different population groups with each other (Laki Kotoutumisen Edistämisestä 1386/2010). In this paper I argue that in fact this support is directed only to assistance in finding employment and language learning. This rather narrow approach neglects very essential part of integration process that is after the start of employment. If you imagine the process of integration as a continuous in time axis with the employment as an essential life-changing point, this paper is seeking to explore the period that situates afterwards. Occupation is often regarded as one of the most significant factors of integration (Borkert & Bosswick, 2007; Maxwell, 2017, p. 233). However, it may not suffice for full integration of immigrant into the destination society. Many studies have shown that getting employed as such does not always mean that an immigrant is assimilated in socio-cultural sense (Fokkema & de Haas, 2015; Munz, 2008).

By the time I got interested in the problems of migration I was working part time in the corporation providing employment to a big number of foreigners that has one of its stores located in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Such study case apparently gives a wonderful opportunity to observe the communication specialities between them and natives. Being more experienced in qualitative methods of research, the participant observation of the workplace appeared very promising to study the integration of immigrants employed there. Hence, the choice of the setting and methodology for this study has come before the research question formulation. In the words of Jeffrey Riemer (1977) this paper constitutes a sort of "opportunistic research", as it is carried out at the case that was available and easily accessible for me. Although it implies certain ethical limitations, to utilise "at hand" (Riemer, 1977, p. 467) knowledge is a rather beneficial approach, especially for a student researcher.

This paper constitutes a case study of the large-scale International Corporation specialising in retail. Owing to the ethical requirements, the information about its business is limited, the name of the corporation is replaced with N. Corporation and all the participants were assigned with pseudonyms. The participant observation was carried out in the logistics department situated inside the store where I worked, due to

the possibility to become a part of the group. Those settings provided me with a chance to study the topic of immigrant integration with the methodological technique of the view “from within” (Malinowski, 1922, p. 25). The fact that I was employed in the corporation where I carried out a research means that I could not only do an observation in the etic sense, as an outside observer, but also get an emic perspective. To be more precise, only being fully immersed into the group one can “grasp the [participant’s] point of view, his relation to life, to realise *his* vision of *his* world” (Malinowski, 1922, p. 25). The case of the corporation where I was employed fits the ethnographic methodology in a sense that before initiating the research I was living as the “natives” themselves do. When I have started the research I was able to see the reality with the participants’ eyes. This however, created an ethical hardship of my personal embeddedness into the studied subject and imposed a high requirement for me to constantly test my own subjectivity.

Before designing the research, I noticed, that in this corporation and in the logistics department in particular, the labour turnover is very high, it was very common to leave the job or to constantly look for better opportunities. During the time I was employed there (1, 5 years), more than a half of the logistics team changed. Many just changed the employer or went to another department of the same corporation. I was curious: why it happens? How it affects employees and especially immigrants? Does this situation marginalise the foreign workers?

My scientific interest was directed mostly on the integration process of immigrants at the workplace and I decided to investigate the communication between them and Finnish nationals. So, in this paper I view the group formation processes inside the logistics department to describe the speciality of immigrant-Finnish communication. I also define how the boundaries between those groups are made through the daily practices of the participants. Crul and Schneider (2010) emphasise the significance of the integration context that is carefully studied in this paper as well. The context of the corporate structure and the precariousness of immigrant workers’ position are discussed primarily. The Welfare and border controls are also considered as contextual matters here.

Hence, the research questions are:

- How integration proceeds after the start of employment?
- In what context the integration takes place?
- How immigrants and native employees communicate with each other at the workplace?

The paper is built to answer the first question through exploration of the two others. To discover how the process of integration continues at the workplace I look at the context of their unstable position in the corporation, define the conditions of employment with the comparison to their Finnish colleagues. After that I provide a more detailed account of how the communication between the native and foreign groups is constructed and changed by the research participants. I consider the precariousness of the immigrant position in the corporation and peculiarities of interaction with their native colleagues as obstacles to successful integration. This is done with the ethnographic approach that utilises such data gathering methods: participant observation, interviewing, collecting of documental data.

The paper consists of introduction, four chapters and discussion sections in which I subsequently define the theoretical bases of the research, methodological approach of it, the precarity as a context of immigrant integration and a group formation processes inside the logistics department of the corporation. The Grounded Theory was used as the strategy of data analysis and theory building, so it is important to understand that the empirical chapters 4 and 5 were written before the theoretical basis was formulated.

2 Theoretical bases of the research

The aim of this chapter is manifold, firstly, to introduce the context of migration in Finland and distinguish the place of this research in the social science scholarship, secondly, to outline the theoretical framework of this paper, thirdly, to review the literature of the relative topics and to define the central concepts. Lastly, I describe the study case of the N. Corporation. The sections of this chapter are organised by the concepts that are discussed in each of them.

2.1 Migration in Finland and the topicality of the research

Before the 2000s only 1,6% of Finnish population was born outside the country (Heikkilä & Peltonen, 2002, p. 2). Finland was commonly characterised as emigration country due to fairly big outflow of Finnish nationals to Sweden and other countries. However, the trends have started to change in the early 80-s when the net migration has become positive and after that the immigration experienced a steady growth (Heikkilä & Peltonen, 2002).

Nowadays, even if Finland is more ethnically homogenous than other EU countries, it constitutes a rather multinational country with approximately 10% of population 25-44 age-group being foreign born (Statistics Finland, 2016). In the year of 2015, 6.2% of total Finnish population had a foreign background (Statistics Finland, 2016). This percentage is low comparing to, for instance, Belgium and Ireland that have about 16% of foreign-born population or Germany that has a share of 12.6% of non-German nationals (Eurostat, 2015). The immigration flow to Finland during the last decade has experienced a rather steady and strong growth (see table 1). Considering those changes in the society, the topic of migration is increasingly becoming more urgent for Finland as well as for other Nordic countries.

According to the Finnish Immigration Service, the types of migration that country faced most frequently during the last decade are family, labour and study migration. In the year of 2016 there have been 10579, 7445 and 7161 residence permits applications received on those bases respectively. 1034 Quota refugees and 1628 people who seek for international protection received residence permits that year. (Finnish Immigration Service, 2017e)

Table 1. Immigration in Finland 2005-2015

Year	Immigration	Net migration
2005	21 355	8 986
2007	26 029	13 586
2009	26 699	14 548
2011	29 481	16 821
2013	31 941	18 048
2015	28 746	12 441

As the Ministry of the Interior states (2013, p. 13):

Finland will require highly qualified and other skilled workers, experts and entrepreneurs in different fields if it is to ensure the functioning of the labour market and to maintain the country's competitiveness. We will need active, systematic and targeted work-related migration.

In addition, according to the Ministry of the Interior (2013) the labour migration is at the focus of attention due to its capability to produce family migration. If an immigrant is willing to move his family to Finland, he must have sufficient means of support (Finnish Immigration Service, 2017d). It means that one ought to have an income that equals a sum of the cost of living in the country for all family members, which is possible only having a steady and high income (migrants who are seeking for asylum in Finland have different regulations). By moving the family or making the family in Finland labour migrants are capable of improving the demographic situation. As it is stated in the "Government resolution on the future of migration: 2020 strategy" (Ministry of the Interior, 2013) the dependency ratio problem is proposed to be facilitated with labour migration. It has been predicted that in the near future there will be significantly more those who are retiring from the labour market than those who are entering it. It will affect primarily the social and health sectors, as there would be an increasing number of citizens who are in need of those services as well as less people contributing to their functionality by paying taxes.

De facto, large part of migrant labourers are those who initially had moved to Finland for other purposes and started to work later on, as most of the residence permit

types grant immigrants with the working right (with different restrictions). Labour, student, asylum based and all other migrants have the possibility to work and to reunite their families in Finland, thus, the approach directed on attraction of just labour migrants is much bounded.

Concerning the migrants existing in the country, one direction of the migration regime development strategy is raising the employment rate (Ministry of the Interior, 2013). The share of jobless among this part of population is 3 times higher than among Finnish nationals. The measures to be taken to overcome those problems touch upon topics of learning the languages and assistance in finding employment. Having a potential to contribute to the Finnish economic and social development trends, immigrants need to be settled in the new country properly to fulfil its' functions. However, the orientation of the policy on migrants' employment is very narrow as it does not lead to their full participation in the society.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Seppelin, 2010) published "Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers" in the section of Finnish Integration Policy. There is a plan for integration that outlines the measures that are taken to facilitate immigrants' settlement and how the process of integration is followed. What is particularly interesting for this research, this document is mostly focused on learning the Swedish and Finnish languages, obtaining new qualifications and on assistance in finding an employment, and it is neglecting very essential aspects of integration.

The problem that I am stating in this paper is that the integration process includes not only acquisition of skills and learning the language but also social and cultural acceptance by the local majority (Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008, p. 162). To be more precise, getting the occupation does not stop the process of integration. When immigrant is moving to Finland for the purpose of working, his integration starts only at the time he moves to a new country. However, the measures for his integration are limited only to learning language. For those who look for employment after living here for a while the integration process does not stop at the point of finding occupation, but it continues afterwards. Thus, I affirm that the orientation of the integration policy and programmes only to learning languages and finding employment is bounded and it overlooks the essential parts of integration such

as social and cultural. Moreover, I affirm that after an immigrant have already found an occupation, be it a place in the colleague or a job position, the institution where an immigrant have just entered makes a crucial contribution to the integration process.

One of the main websites for immigrants Infopankki.fi in the section of “Integration into Finland” (Kotoutuminen Suomeen) mentions 3 parts of integration: learning the language, finding a job or a student position and forming contacts within Finnish society (Infopankki, 2017). The latter constitutes the social and cultural integration that is overlooked in the Finnish immigration policy. This portal for migrants mentions all three parts of integration process, but it does not provide information about all of them. It gives the useful links to the Finnish job-seeking services, to Finnish Social Security Agency (Kela), and multiple links to the Ministry of Economic Development and Employment. However, information about the local communities and possibilities to socialize is very scarce and difficult to find, especially on the languages other than Finnish. The socio-cultural part of the integration is left for the institutions that take command of the immigrants such as universities (or other educational institutions) or organisations in which they are employed.

In the governmental resolution about immigration future (Ministry of the Interior, 2013) in the section “Everyone can find a role to play” the work, education and training, children’s day-care, free-time activities, civil society and everyday interaction are all mentioned as channels for successful integration. Yet, the focus is made on the employment (e.g. section named “Migrants can make use of their skills”) and Finnish or Swedish language skills as primary objectives for immigrants to achieve.

The government in Finland plays a central role in the immigrants’ incorporation into the society, however, the role of the employer in this process is also important. A very large part of immigrants are dependent on their employers because of the fact that the residence permit (concerning non-EU member states’ immigrants) is granted for them on the basis of occupation. To be more precise, labour migrants, getting discharged from their work place, are forced to come back to their home country as their residency in the country is no longer legal.

Even if the position of immigrant is not that vulnerable as in this example, further integration depends on how the employer manages his entrance and incorporation and how the circumstances of the workplace will fit a newcomer.

Therefore, carrying out a research on the topic of immigrant integration in Finland, migrants' workplaces constitute particular scientific interest.

2.2 Defining immigrant integration

While studying migrant integration topic one should take into consideration local understanding of this phenomenon. Depicting the state as one of the central actors for migrant integration, I provide definitions of this concept by the authorities, firstly, Finnish Ministry of the Interior:

Integration means that immigrants adapt themselves to Finnish society and acquire new skills, competences and practices which help them actively participate in the life of their new home country. Some immigrants find it easy to integrate; others need more time and support services - integration measures - to adapt themselves. Some knowledge of Finnish or Swedish, and information about Finnish society are important requirements for integration. (Ministry of the Interior, 2017)

Another officially used definition is formulated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in the section "Integration of immigrants" on its' official website:

Integration is a continuous two-way process in which society is changing as the population is becoming more diverse and immigrants acquire knowledge and skills that they need in society and working life. This requires commitment on the part of the immigrants and the country receiving them. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2017)

I have already argued in the beginning of this paper about the official definitions of integration process being too narrow, but I want to emphasise, that only employment and language skills acquisition are included into the concept. My current research utilises the wider understanding as I view the social and economic parts of integration and observe the communication and interaction of Finns and immigrants. In

the social sciences the immigrant integration is often depicted through the notion of participation. As Sarah Spencer states (1995, as cited in Heikkilä, 2005) that successful integration means full social, legal, cultural, economic participation in the society. Having comparable rights to those of national citizens is a crucial attribute of this concept (Heikkilä, 2005, p. 486).

Similarly to those studies, M. Crul and J. Schneider (2010) define migrant integration (or assimilation) through the participation and belonging. The latter means getting the stable and indisputable position in the society as well as developing it using the different social networks. The participation is understood as access to the resources and institutions, which is empirically more measurable, but this concept includes also a feeling of belonging that is to large extent influenced by many contextual factors. In their study M. Crul and J. Schneider emphasise the significance of the political, social interaction and media discourses as context in which the participation and belonging are facilitated or ceased (Crul & Schneider, 2010, p. 11-15). I find the definition of migrant integration through the participation particularly useful for this paper because it encompasses all the essential aspects of the process and suits the methodology of this research. In this paper the social and economic participation are at the focus and they are studied as intertwined aspects of integration in the context of local legal and social discourses and in the context of migrant . in the corporation where they are employed.

This study has a certain policy implication, as it aims to provide justification for the wider understanding of immigrant integration being implemented to the official sources. I argue that the process of integration is multidimensional and policy makers should consider it as a complex situational phenomenon without reducing this concept to certain aspects.

2.3 Precarity of migrant labour

Occupation is considered to play the central role among other post-migration factors of integration (Forsander, 2003; Heikkilä, 2005; Maxwell, 2017). Certainly, employment does make an effect on the integration, but the problem is that a lot of studies take it for granted without considering other very influential aspects of the process. The fact that one is employed does not always make a significant impact on the socio-cultural integration, as it has been investigated by the study of African immigrants

to Italy and Spain (Fokkema & de Haas, 2015). In that study the hypothesis that employment simplifies the contacts with native population was refuted. This was explained by the high level of labour market segmentation, which means that in Spanish and Italian situations there are professions that are completely dominated by migrant workers, for instance low-skilled service occupations. Therefore, working in a kind of migrant-dominated position does not increase the chances of making new contacts with natives. However, this issue may vary depending on each country; Finnish labour market, for instance, may not have such salient segmentation. There are studies that have shown that migrants often are in the segregated position in the labour markets in the developed countries (Munz, 2008; Shelley, 2007). The scholarship about immigrant integration is very wide in Nordic countries and in Finland in particular. However, most of literature explore what happens between the time when immigrant has come to the country and when he has found an employment (Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2008; Martikainen, Saukkonen, & Säävälä, 2013; Sarvimäki, 2011; Wahlbeck, 2007) leaving the part of integration that is after the start of the employment overlooked.

My study seeks to contribute to the sociological discussion on immigrant precarious labour in Nordic countries and Finland in particular (De Genova, 2002; Forsander, 2003; Jørgensen & Meret, 2012; Könönen, 2017; Malmberg-Heimonen & Julkunen, 2006; Martin & Prokkola, 2017; Sainsbury, 2012). Specifically, empirical case touches upon the topic of immigrant integration at the workplace. I intend to bring up the problem of immigrants' separated and vulnerable position at the workplace as constraining factors of their integration. In Finland the studies of immigrants at their workplaces are limited to the sector of domestic and care workers (Krivonos, 2016; Lauren & Wrede, 2008; Näre & Akhtar, 2014); or the other manual workers (Abbasian & Hellgren, 2012). The retail business and studies of those employed in the logistics sector have not been represented in literature.

From the methodological point, the existing studies of migrants' workplaces do not study the circumstances where foreigners have plentiful opportunities to socialise with natives. The N. Corporation personnel are not dominated by immigrants and what is more, foreign employees encounter with natives every day. Studies focusing on later stages of integration, where immigrants initially have similar circumstances with natives yet has not been represented in Finnish migration scholarship.

In the late 20s century precarious forms of work constituted a very large problem mostly for developing countries (Rodgers & Rodgers, 1989, p. 1) where a large or sometimes even prevailing share of jobs was unstable and insecure. Those were temporary jobs that lacked social benefits, usually characterized as low-paid positions. Workers were vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, they did not feel safe for their future as they had a high risk of job loss (Shelley, 2007, p. 24). Western European countries on the contrary have managed to render this issue less exacerbated at least for the national populations. However, the later studies on social transformation that promoted the start of the new age of social insecurity (Beck, 1992; Sennett, 1998) and a trend of proliferation of atypical and casual labour brought up the discussion of the labour precariousness in developed countries and in Finland in particular.

Becoming a global phenomenon, the studies on precarious labour were recently growing exponentially and this widely recognised social problem has acquired new articulations. Guy Standing (2011) in the book, suggested a classification of social classes with precarious workers forming one separate social unit “precariat” (Standing, 2011, pp. 5–7). Connecting two concepts of proletariat and precarity has made up a new neologism of initial notion suggested by Bourdieu. It has also given a new sense to the Max Weber’s lumpen proletariat concept (Weber, 1922 quoted in Standing, 2011, p. 7). The latter means social stratum that has a marginal position in the social class system (Giddens, 1971, p. 38). According to Giddens, lumpen proletariat consists of people without a certain occupation, who are disintegrated from the division of labour and are “living on the crumbs of the society” (1971, p. 38). Standing explains that, similarly to Max Weber’s lumpen proletariat, the central aspect of precariat is the temporariness and indefinite character of labour. For example, casual workers are included in this social unit. He depicts this social class as one that has identification peculiarity, in his words the precariat has “lack of a secure work-based identity” (Standing, 2011, p. 16). In addition, they are rarely trying to build own career as they miss control over the labour.

Many studies have shown that migrants are commonly among those who do not manage to keep their labour stable. In the context of social transformation the precarious labour studies in the 2000-s have become widely connected to migration (Schierup & Jørgensen, 2016, p. 7). In England the topic of migrant precarity was largely popularized by Bridget Anderson (2010). Anderson studied British immigration

policies that shape the labour market and produce a sector of precarious workers who are often subject to many mechanisms of control from the employers. Anderson states, that the immigration regime of the United Kingdom aims, on the one hand, at positioning the national labour force in a priority, and from the other hand at protecting the immigrants from exploitation (Anderson, 2010, p. 301). She claims that in fact it only creates uncertainty and stratifies the labour market, locating immigrants to a vulnerable position.

The international labour migration scholarship has often explained work oriented migration with the state policies that are shaping that global phenomenon. The Schengen Agreement apparatus and EU internal mobility unify the border controls for immigrants whose countries of departure are inside the European Union (Martin & Prokkola, 2017, p. 144), however, non-EU immigrants are regulated differently depending on the country of settlement. Hence, it is significant to consider not only the global but also a local political context. The study by Martin Lauren (2017) that looked at knowledge workers, airline cabin crew, and berry-pickers has demonstrated how the policy of national bordering and territorialisation differentiates the labour and creates precarity in the Finnish local juridico-political context (Martin & Prokkola, 2017). It is argued that migrants very often work at positions lower than their actual qualification. This kind of employment demands geographical mobility and has exploitative conditions, which results in immigrant workers' exclusion from labour market processes. The borders are hence multiplied for them and their position is made precarious. Those cases are extreme and they cannot be generalised to the wider level, however, this study has provoked an extensive public debate and has drawn the attention of many politicians and social scientists to the topic of precarity of immigrant labour in Finland.

My study touches upon the topic of Finnish migration regulations background discussion as it is significant to understanding the local cultural and legal context. The Nordic Welfare States are often viewed to have very effective models of migration and labour market regulation (Jørgensen & Meret, 2012). Yet, there are many studies that analyse how the migration law produces inequality and clusters non-citizens into different categories with uneven distribution of many public resources such as labour market. For instance, Jukka Könönen (2017) argues that immigration controls construct

a system of immigrants' differential social inclusion. He states that those who move to Finland for study purposes, labour, family reunification migrants and asylum seekers encounter divergent pathways to reach the citizenship. Precisely, those groups have different requirements to get their residency legal; moreover, the access to the labour market and to public resources is unequally diversified. (Könönen, 2017.) Könönen affirms that Immigration controls and welfare controls are interrelated as the residency status regulates the access to welfare services which shapes migrants' position in the society, or in his words "creates asymmetrical social relations" (Könönen, 2017, p. 8).

As in social democratic welfare state, in Finland eligibility for welfare services is related primarily to residency status and citizenship. However, it does not mean that all people who reside in Finland have the right for welfare benefits. The right for universal health insurance, income security and other welfare benefits are not entitled or are limited for the temporary residents (Eggebo, 2010; Sainsbury, 2012). This conditionality of migrant residency status consequently positions a big share of them to a rather vulnerable state. Therefore, a residency as a basis for social entitlement is in fact not inclusive, but on the contrary, it creates a boundary between the temporal and permanent residents providing them with a right for welfare benefits or cutting them off (Korhonen, 2013). In Finland there is another basis for social inclusion, which is an employment status. In the sections 4.4 and 4.5 I discuss how it influences the eligibility for benefits more closely.

Studies of temporary residents, such as students have clearly illustrated their vulnerable position in the society (Korhonen, 2013; Maury, 2017). Migration for study purposes has experienced a steady growth in Finland in the last 10 years. Many Western countries have recently simplified the process of student residence permit obtainment and have developed mechanisms that assist those students stay in the country and find employment after graduation. In Finland in particular, a foreign alumni of Finnish University or the University of Applied Sciences can be granted with a residence permit for 6 months to look for a job (Finnish Immigration Service, 2017c). The residence permit on the basis of studying is always a temporary one and is needed when the studying period is longer than 3 months. The residence permit is then given with respect to the duration of studies and if the educational programme is longer than one year the residence permit can be granted only for 1 year with the following right for renewal.

(Finnish Immigration Service, 2017.) One is eligible for a student residence permit only after proving that he has means of support (average of 6720 euro per year in 2017). Due to this requirement, it is very common for students to combine both working and studying (Maury, 2017, p. 1). In addition, in Finland non-EU immigrant students' right to work is restricted to 25 hours per week.

In comparison to Finnish students, who have access to the welfare benefits and do not have any restrictions concerning work permit, immigrant students' rights are significantly limited (Maury, 2017, p. 4). To avoid the risk of deportation, non-EU foreign students try to fulfil the demand of means of support. Having language difficulties and work permit restrictions, students very frequently end up working in flexible low skilled positions (Maury, 2017, p. 5). This narrows the ability to plan their future, makes this cluster of immigrants immobile. Moreover, as student migrants are temporary residents of this country, they are left outside of the welfare benefit and social security systems.

Migrants' mobility difficulties are studied in Finland viewing the gender aspect of it (Näre & Akhtar, 2014). Clustering migrants on the basis of country of departure and analysing their mobility has led the study of Elli Heikkilä (2005) to the results that the ethnic origin makes a significant impact on the migrants' access to the resources of labour market. The largest diversity was shown between migrants from OECD countries and from so-called "distant cultures" (Heikkilä, 2005, p. 490) in their chances to succeed in labour market. The migrants from the developing countries are more subject to experience a mobile vulnerability which is explained as a social condition in which the human rights are violated (Heikkilä, 2005, p. 491). As a result, in many cases the even partial cultural, legal, economic and social participation is not achieved which characterises the integration level as not satisfactory.

The quantitative research has been made on the immigrants' position in the Finnish labour market that has shown the significant relation of the nationality with labour market integration (Forsander, 2003). The number of immigrants who are coming to Finland for the purposes other than employment was much bigger than the labour migration, which apparently resulted in the large share of immigrants being unemployed. Moreover, as the study of Forsander has shown that the majority of research participants were in "unstable (60 %) or marginal (28 %)" (Forsander, 2003, p.

67) positions relating to the labour market. Recently, increasing flow of immigrants and asylum seekers to Finland has amplified those trends.

A concept of precarity or its many neologisms like precariat, precariousness as a social science concept traces back to Pierre Bourdieu “Travail Et Travailleurs En Algérie” book written in 1963 (p. 53 as cited in Standing, 2011, p. 130) where he depicted colonial Algerian workers as precarious. He used that term to underline the distinction of the racialized contingent workers from those who are employed permanently. In 1980s different versions of that concept were taken into wider use in European social sciences research in relation to informal and temporary labour (Jørgensen & Schierup, 2016, pp. 7–9). Meaning of the precarity concept has changed since that time and now it includes more than insufficient salary and absence of social benefits, as I marked above. Not all of those jobs may be called precarious, thus to avoid this ambiguity, Gary and Janine Rodgers (1989, p. 3) point out:

The concept of precariousness involves instability, lack of protection, insecurity and social or economic vulnerability... An unstable job is not necessarily precarious. It is some combination of these factors which identifies precarious jobs, and the boundaries around the concept are inevitably to some extent arbitrary.

In spite of being strongly criticised for being too general, imprecise and for lacking empirical applicability, the notion of precarity is still used in contemporary social research. Bridget Anderson (2010), for instance, to complement that wide and quite blurred definition highlights the temporariness of that kind of employment and points out that an immigrant, being employed in the precarious workplace, is in the situation of unpredictability of his future which affects the social relations. This predicament position is complicated by the economic vulnerability that is expressed in low wages and instability of the income. (Anderson, 2010, pp. 302–304.)

In Finnish situation the temporal aspect is explicit in the immigration controls: the length of residence permit on the basis of work depends on the work contract that one has. Those, who have found a workplace with a fixed-term contract, can be granted with a residence permit only for the time bounded in the contract. In addition, the first

residence permit for an immigrant worker that has obtained a permanent (indefinite) work contract can be given only for 1 year. This means that in one year he is obliged to prove that he still has the right to live and work in Finland making the migrant precariousness twofold, in terms of instability of labour and in terms of the legality of the residency. (Finnish Immigration Service, 2017.)

Furthermore, the concept of precarity embraces not only atypical and insecure employment but also the social aspect of immigrants' life (Anderson, 2015; Cambell, 2016). The requirement to be hyper flexible with working times as well as general uncertainty and unpredictability weaken or completely destroy the social relations (Anderson, 2010, p. 303).

The precarity of immigrants' work is very often understood as a synonym to the illegality of the employment. Truly, working in the sector of shadow economy can be characterised as precarious, since it is insecure, unsafe and unpredictable. However, the case of my study excludes this sort of understanding of the term. To be more precise, the corporation in which the research was done is not employing illegal immigrants nor is paying cash-in-hand. Hence, when I discuss the precariousness in work surrounding that I investigate, I mean the insecurity, unpredictability, instability and vulnerability of legal immigrant labour, because those workers are employed under official work contracts. In this paper I affirm, that even being legal, those positions can be called precarious due to plenty of characteristics that clearly define them as such.

2.4 Doing distance and boundary making theories

2.4.1 Defining doing distance

In this paper I use the formulation "doing distance" which was adapted from the D. Lawrence Wieder's book "Language and Social Reality: The Case of Telling the Convict Code" (1974). This study was carried out with a practical purpose to find out the reasons for rehabilitation institutions low efficiency. In this case, the halfway house was under the investigation that was opened for the "parolees previously convicted of narcotics offences" (Wieder, 1974, p. 10). The goal of the project was to raise the number of successful parole. The research analyses the social interaction of the

residents of halfway house and the staff that is working there, using the semiotic theory. Having the theoretical perspective of rule-governed human behaviour as a starting point, D.L. Wieder analyses the relationship between the norms and conduct.

In this theoretical context the processes of segregation and distancing are viewed there. In Wieder's sense that concept "doing distance" (Wieder, 1974, p. 76) consists of three aspects of segregation. First is ecological segregation or keeping physical distance between the staff of half-way house and its residents. In his words the distance was done through "bodily movements" (Wieder, 1974, p. 76) that the residents have been making during every kind of public gathering. If they all gathered together, for instance, in the recreational area or in the canteen, the residents tended to move close to each other and stand or sit separately from the staff. Therefore spatially isolated groups of personnel and residents appeared leaving the staff talking to each other. In a situation when both parties happened to be at the same place, doing distance through conversational style took place. This kind of segregation means that when the staff manages to overcome a pattern of the physical segregation and mix those groups, the residents' conversations become limited to the same sort of mundane topics, such as "casual talk about themselves, their plans, their hopes" (Wieder, 1974, p. 81) or events that recently happened around them. Showing lack of interest to the staff's stories about their lives was another mode of doing conversational distance. The discussion then did not have a proper continuation and was coming to an end quite quickly. Accomplishing distance through the use of language was the third mode of isolation from the staff. Most of the residents are Mexican Americans and speak both Spanish and English fluently. However, none of the members of staff has a good command of Spanish, which made that sort of segregation possible. In mixed gathering situations residents often talked in Spanish which excluded the staff from the conversation and isolated the groups from each other. Communication in Spanish always seemed a lot more enjoyable, louder and cheerful as it excluded the staff from it.

This concept was chosen to theorise on the processes observed in the corporation because the frequently noticed codes such as "distancing" or "making distance" in the data had a very close meaning. The circumstances of halfway house study are completely different, however, in this paper the processes of separation and grouping have similar structure to the Wieder's process of doing distance. For instance,

in the N. Corporation the use of language was observed to play a role in separation of immigrants and Finns. Physical movements described above were represented in participants' actions in the staff canteen. They chose appropriate places to be with a certain group which I view as a mode of separation of foreigners from Finns and vice versa.

In this paper, doing distance means a process of creating a boundary between the Finnish and foreign employees through linguistic and national distinction. This process includes patterns of behaviour directed on separation of one national-linguistic group from another, and a pattern of gathering together with a certain group rather than entire isolation of it.

2.4.2 Boundary making and agency

In contemporary social research the focus has been moved closer to approaches that underline human agency. This paper does not have theorisation on agency and structure dilemma as one of objectives, nevertheless I use the concept of agency for my later elaborations. I connect my argument to the pragmatist tradition of agency as I view the actions of research participants intrinsically relative to the social context. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) developing the tradition primarily associated with John Dewey, George Herbert Mead and Alfred Schutz, define agency as capability of actor to reproduce and transform the structures in a certain context. They also list the central elements of agency concept hence making it more analysable. The first one is habitual characteristic of the agency that links the notion to the routinized or iterative actions. The second is imagination aspect that refers to the possible prospect changes that agent wants or hopes to make in response to the existing structure. Finally, the judgemental element entails agent's analytical evaluation of the probable actions that he is planning to take. Agency is always a relational phenomenon, which originates as a response to certain structured environment and refers to a particular in time and space social context. (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 970.) This perspective on the agency is exhaustive as it embraces the most significant elements that had previously been viewed in social sciences only separately. In addition, it disaggregates the concept into the components making it applicable to the empirical research.

Following the pragmatist tradition in understanding the human agency, Hans Joas (1996) described it as a capability for creative action, which in his words constitutes “permanent reorganisation and reconstitution of habits and institution” (Joas, 1996, p. 24). Such characterisation of agency as situational creativity entails that action is always social, as it is constructed in response to certain institutions and environments. Thus, in this paper I discuss the actions of logistics team employees in a context of the existent structural environment.

In the study of ethnic boundaries the agency approach was promoted to be more fruitful already in 1990s. F. Barth’s (1994) study of the ethnic boundaries is among the most influential works in the field of ethnicity and culture. Studying how the boundaries are made and defined by actors opens up that those groups are produced in a certain interactional environment. This interactional approach that is emerging primarily from works of Fredrik Barth (1969, 1994) implies an appropriate way of studying the ethnic identity. There, the focus is on experiences of agent that develop this identity, and on the processes of communication, ascription and self-ascription to the group. Barth emphasised the importance of viewing the ethnic boundaries through the processes of group formation and changes in their populations instead of investigating the “nebulous expression of culture” (Barth, 1994, p. 12) inherent to those groups. Differentiating the concepts of culture and ethnicity from one another and focusing on how boundaries are made has turned the emphasis of ethnicity studies into the new direction.

Contributing to those development trends, Andreas Wimmer (2008) classified the possible strategies how an actor can determine own position in relation to the existing boundaries. He defines the actions directed on shifting, inverting or blurring the boundary as the main methods of boundary making that have versatile subdivisions. This classification has built a basis for further research of the ethnic boundaries from the perspective of person’s agency. Following the ideas of Barth, Wimmer stresses the processes of ethnic group formation and the meaning of actors in it instead of defining cultural peculiarities of them. Understanding the role of interactional, political, social and economic circumstances in which those groups are made is the key to distinguishing between the strategies of the ethnic boundary making. (Wimmer, 2008, pp. 6–19.)

In this paper, similarly to the ethnic boundary studies of Barth, the process of social distancing is described as something that is produced by agents themselves. I view the distant relations of foreign and Finnish colleagues who tended to form two different national-linguistic groups. Those groups originate from daily choices of communication partners, from the encounters of each co-worker with one another and their interaction peculiarities. Boundaries imply structured interaction that commodifies the social distance between the groups. The structured interaction here is a way of the daily communication within the group and among groups that adheres to certain rules. I view the use of language as a sort of structured interaction that has been observed to determine the relations between the two groups in this research, namely the Finnish-speaking and English-speaking group. By viewing the case of N. Corporation I investigate how the ethnic boundary (or social distance) between those two groups is reproduced by the actors and how the social life is organised by those divisions.

The existence of the boundary might be manifested implicitly in the interaction of those groups, for instance, in Finnish worker being reluctant to start a conversation with his foreign colleagues. In the staff restaurant the distant relations of Finnish and immigrant co-workers were more explicitly expressed when a Finnish worker demonstratively stood up from a table where only foreigners were sitting and took another place with a group of Finns. The difference of behaviour of Finnish worker depending on who he interacts with, a Finnish national or with a foreigner is another example of how distance was produced by the agents. In addition, the observation has shown that foreign workers sometimes changed their habits to shift the position of the boundary, for instance, when they tried to enter another national group. By doing so, they shifted their position (even if temporarily) within the separated structure of personnel.

As many have stated, viewing the context of the boundary making processes is essential due to the boundaries being always a rather haphazard, situational phenomenon (Barth, 1994; Dummler, Dahinden, & Moret, 2010; Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Wimmer, 2008). Investigating the social distances between two national-linguistic groups, I examine the context of corporate culture, hierarchical structure of company, immigrants' precarious and segregated position in the corporation.

2.5 Description of the corporation and logistics work routines

For this research I was allowed to uncover just a limited description of the company. Due to the confidentiality reasons, I do not use the name of the corporation and I also use different titles for the departments of that corporation not to share the restricted information. All the names of the research participants that are written in the text are pseudonyms and their gender is covered. The N. Corporation exists in the list of 100 biggest employers of Finland and it is an international limited liability company specialising on retailing. N. is a large-scale business, it has many branches in Finland as well as in other countries and employs a big number of immigrants; it can be characterised as having an internationally diverse personnel. The logistics department based inside one of the store buildings was studied, mainly focusing on the part of it where I was employed - replenishment. Being the largest department in the store, logistics in the words of the HR manager Henna was called the “most immigrant department” of the store, which means that the share of foreign workers there is higher than in other departments of that store. Hence, this department is the most suitable for the analysis of immigrant-Finnish interaction.

Here the main processes and tasks that compile the replenishment team’s work are described with the extract from the fieldnotes:

Logistics department is divided into replenishment and warehouse parts. The function of the department that I observed (replenishment) is to move goods received from the trucks (receiving from the truck is warehouse job) to all store hall departments and then to put them to the shelves. Usually there are 1-3 people carrying the goods to the departments using the electric machines – forklifts called “surfers”. One of them is a “tiimivetäjä” or just “veto”, the person responsible for how the workers manage the job in a certain day, usually he is leading about 10-14 employees. Other workers are responsible for their own department, they take the products out of boxes and replenish them to the right shelves. Some departments are big and need more than 1 worker.

There are 7 destinations of work (or departments) where the replenishment team does its job. Only one of them always needs more than one person to work, others get more than 1 worker only at busy times. The “veto” drives all around

the store to carry the new coming goods and he always can see which departments are busy and which are not, so they can move people around to help one another. All that process is called the goods replenishment. Workers use mobile-scanner to get the information about the product they are replenishing.

The normal working shift for replenishment co-workers starts at 5 o'clock in the morning and ends at 10, with the exception of "tiimivetäjä" who should start earlier than the team, 4 or 3:30 am. Formally, the normalised shift is 5 hours which are usually extended to 15-30 minutes by carrying the products that are left and the rubbish away from the customer place or just finishing the work that was not done.

The population of the replenishment department personnel changes quite often, depending on the seasonal need for workers and other recruitment specialities. It varies around 25-37 people and half of them are ordinarily foreign workers. This part of logistics department has a higher ratio of immigrants than the warehouse nevertheless, from the words of the HR Manager, the whole logistics department is the most foreign department in the store. Warehouse is responsible for receiving goods from the trucks and for replenishing the goods in another part of the store. The numbers of logistics co-workers and their nationality was counted from the working shift timetable, where the names of all employees are listed.

Saying that a half of the replenishment team is foreign is quite rough and to define it more accurately, there is usually slightly more immigrants present at the workplace, than Finnish workers. Due to the fact that there are different types of part-time contracts for different contractual hours to be completed per week, employees come to work with different frequency. For instance, some of them have 10 hour contracts and work only twice a week, but some have five-day working week. Immigrant workers having on average larger contracts or working more than native employees with the same contracts are present more often than Finns. This means that even with the population of the department being half Finnish, in fact, each day's working team consists of more foreigners than natives.

The workers of logistics do not have any special demographic characteristics apart from gender. The age of the studied department is different. There are a lot of

students as well as middle and older aged employees. About three fifth part of the replenishment is male, because the work is quite physical, but other side of logistics (warehouse) is completely male due to the need to lift very heavy things. Most of the logistics employees are married or living with their partners.

2.5.1 Distribution of tasks

Every morning the team is quite different due to the big number of part-timers and the work is planned and reorganised each day over again. As I was working as a shift-responsible person or *vetäjä*, I am familiar with peculiarities of the task allocation process. I have noticed that the allocation of tasks (made by other shift leaders and by me) is done mainly on the basis of skills and competence for the reason of efficiency. The employees are assigned with appropriate tasks depending on how quick and effectively the work will be finished. For instance, one co-worker knows the places of all the typical products that are in the one department, and is chosen to be working in exactly that department most often.

Another basis for task allocation is the responsibility. For instance, one of the destinations of work is localised far from others. Shift leaders do not watch the work process there at all, which means that only a person who the shift leader thinks is responsible can be there, who can finish the tasks without the leader keeping eye on him. Hence, the work process is organised so, that those tasks are always completed by the responsible person.

To improve the communication of each department and among the departments there are mobile phones that colleagues can use. The replenishment department does not have phones for all co-workers, they have only 5 mobiles. As I observed, those phones are not only the means of communication that make the work process smoother, but also a means of transferring the responsibility value. By this I mean, that phones are given only to the responsible workers. The decisions whom to give a phone and who will accomplish the more responsible tasks are made by the shift leaders. As I became one of them after being employed there for some time, the manager of logistics team introduced those specialities of the task allocation process to me while teaching me to lead the team.

Excluding my own decisions, here I discuss only the decisions of other three shift leaders who work in the logistics department. During the observations I noticed a pattern that those, who are doing the tasks that require more responsibility are more often Finnish employees than those with a foreign background, however the tendency does not always show the same pattern. The less valuable tasks, such as throwing the rubbish or easy work destinations are more often done by immigrants.

The workplace hierarchy then has both its formal and informal aspects. Officially there are managers, shift leaders and co-workers, however implicitly the division is more specified. The managers and shift leaders while organising the work must distinguish between the tasks that require more responsibility and self-discipline and the rest. This informal division of co-workers can be characterised as racialized if we consider the example of Finnish employees being more frequently chosen to complete the more responsible tasks.

2.5.2 The place of English language in the corporation

To understand the boundary making processes better, it is important to understand the significance of English language for the N. Corporation. This organisation is large-scale and transnational, so English language is the one that unites its branches together. All management employment roles in this store as a rule have a requirement to speak a fluent level of English, and some of them even do not have such strict demand about the Finnish language.

This particular store has a very big number of personnel which is over 400 members, who can read the journal published every week for the staff about the news happening in that store as well as in this corporation in general. The topics that are usually discussed there are the sustainability of business, the new products that are coming into sales, the successful growth of staff members who have just changed their working roles in the shop. The job advertisements are also published there for the employees to read. This paper has always the information duplicated in both Finnish and English languages in a way that firstly the page is written in Finnish and in the next page it is translated into English. Those journals are always put on the shelves in the staff restaurant available to everybody to read while they are having a meal as well as to take them home and read more attentively.

Another justification of the importance of English for the corporation is the fact that vacancies available in that corporation are often published on its website in English or both in English and Finnish languages. Some of them mention that they do not require an applicant to speak Finnish. The job advertisement mentions a list of characteristics that the job demands, where speaking of just one of Finnish or English languages is expected from the job seeker. In this manner only the logistics positions are advertised, which makes this area of corporation open to many different foreigners and as a consequence makes it one of the most international departments of the store. I got this information from this weekly paper where the advertisements were attached. I followed it for the only purpose of understanding the place of English language in the corporation, focusing on the most relevant information about the vacancy advertising.

One of the representations of the meaningfulness of English for the corporation was found from observation of the informational meetings organised for the personnel. They are sometimes arranged at the working time to introduce the recent data about the sales and different indexes that the shop reached as well as about the goals to pursue in the future. Those are either in English or in both languages depending on the person who presents and on the audience (sometimes the announcer asks is it ok to have a meeting just in English), so, English language has a privileged role there.

At those info meetings the speakers are always the senior managers or the store manager, depending on the sort of information and who is the most familiar with it. Some of the data they present is global information about the whole corporation that may exist only in English language, so at those meetings it needs to be translated into Finnish after the speaker has presented it in English. Sometimes the host of those meetings can be a person who does not speak Finnish at all, so he needs an interpreter to translate his speech. However, those meetings do not always have any translator and are held completely in English.

In the replenishment team particularly the work related questions are very often discussed in English with everybody, even if some of the employees do not speak English. For instance, quite often after the breakfast or after the shift the meetings only for the replenishment team are arranged in English where a manager of this department, or a shift leader (tiimivetäjä) shares some ideas or tells about the current situation such as how busy is the day and does somebody need help. This happens I assume also

because of the special position of English language in the business of the corporation. There was an interesting situation that happened at one of the meetings like this when a co-worker who does not speak English asked to translate the information into Finnish but he got an answer: “you’ve got to learn English”. After that, one of the co-workers started to translate everything to him individually and quietly so that he does not disturb the announcer.

English, being an official language of the corporation worldwide, diversifies the corporation attracting foreign employees to both the managerial and co-worker positions. Therefore, the meaningfulness of the English language does not only allow foreigners to feel comfortable in the corporation, but can even marginalise the Finnish-only speakers. As a result of analysis, I can conclude that in such International Corporation, English may in some cases have a prevalent position in relation to a local language. Thus, lack of English language skill may even put a person in unfavourable position. In a case mentioned above a Finnish employee was unable to understand important work-related information and as a consequence was marginalised. This sort of marginalisation may happen in other situations, such as informal communication inside the logistics department. In section 5 I will discuss how a Finnish-only speaker can find oneself in disadvantageous position because of inability to interact in English.

3 Methodology

This chapter is divided to 4 paragraphs that altogether define the methodological approach of this study. I subsequently deal with the relevance of ethnography to this research, justify the multi-sitedness of the approach, open up the topic of methodology establishment describing how the focus was shifted during the journey of the study and lastly I outline what the data I used and how I analysed it.

3.1 Ethnographic approach

Similarly to other qualitative methods that aim to describe covert phenomena, the ethnographic research rarely follows the strict research design with a hypothesis built from a cohesive well-known theory. Some ethnographic studies are done on testing the hypothesis that was prepared beforehand, however most ethnographers advocate developing the explanations and descriptions or building theories over a distinct phenomenon (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 21). Although having an extensive apprenticeship of this methodological approach is indispensable, following the research design through the whole research process rigorously appears not applicable to what is called ethnography. Moreover, this method is often characterised as having much unpredictability concerning methodological problems that the researcher might face, which makes that sort of research impossible to perform without altering the primary research design, specifying the focus of gaze and changing some of the techniques or strategies of the study. In G. Gobo's terms "a research topic is defined with greater precision in the course of the research: the focus narrows, new aspects of the problem emerge, and resources are totted up" (Gobo, 2008, p. 75). This research was initiated with the research question, not with a hypothesis and the methodological approach was not applied from the beginning remaining unchanged until the end; on the contrary, it has been developed gradually rebuilding and re-specifying it during the course of study, according to upcoming issues that I faced as a researcher. When I started planning my observation I realised that there is a great number of "foreshadowed problems" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 21) that I need to solve before or during the fieldwork. I will describe those issues in this chapter so it is easier to track the process of my focus adjustment and to understand the specificity and peculiarity of the study approach used in this paper.

The contemporary understanding of the ethnographic approach originates from the anthropological studies of distant cultures that were inaccessible and required the researcher to spend years investigating the group of people, to become a member of this group and immerse into it, with the intention to provide insightful description of the culture (Malinowski, 1922; Radcliffe-Brown, 1922). This method was adopted and taken into a broader use in sociology by the Chicago school scientists (Park & Burgess, 1921; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918). Since then, the ethnographic methodology was used for a wide range of topics including the studies of the workplaces. Studies of professional groups are largely represented in the social sciences, such as the research of care workers (Kleinman, 1996; Näre, 2013), restaurant workers and cooks (Fine, 1996; Wahlbeck, 2007), doctors (Becker, Strauss, Geer, & Hughes, 1961), or the police department workers (Manning, 2001). Ethnography is utilised to study many issues at the workplaces, such as the impact of the corporation on the employees, the gender and race relations among the personnel (Hodson, 2004).

Having widened its scope the ethnographic methodology is relevant for the study of immigrant integration, their precariousness and communication with native population at their workplace. As a rather covert phenomenon, the communication and precarization processes require a thorough and deep inquiry. The ethnographic methodology I affirm is the most appropriate approach as it allows the researcher to use multiple sources of data and adjust the research design in the process of the study.

3.2 Multi-sitedness and timing

Unclear site of the observation in the beginning was a significant decision to be made. It was evident that the observation should be inside the building of the corporation, but the question was where exactly should it be done? Is it in the market area where logistics works or the meetings of personnel (that can be in different places) or the staff restaurant? Or should I follow some of the participants separately and observe them working? During the work process (in the market area), quite few interactions happen between the co-workers, everybody spend most of their time working alone. If I do observations in the staff canteen, then the logistics team is there only for breaks for coffee or breakfast that are 15-20 minutes long which is quite a short time to observe. The

meetings cannot be observed as the only source of data as they are not so informative and not so often arranged.

As I could not know which of the places could shed the light on the problem, I have started observing two of the main places where personnel spend time that are the market area and the staff canteen and after that continued observing in the office place. Then, at the time when co-workers' meetings were gathered in the store I studied them as a separate observation site as well.

After I had got the grasp of all three of the main observation sites (market area, staff canteen, office) I specified my observation to two topics: the communication of immigrant and Finnish workers and the precariousness of immigrants' position. The former required observations mainly from the staff canteen but the latter could not be limited to a special observation site. The arguments for the precariousness of the immigrant position originate from different sources: observing in all those sites, asking questions from the participants, interview with the HR manager, listening to the announcements made for the whole personnel, weekly informational journal printed for the personnel (the data sources would be defined later in paragraph 4).

Thus multi-sitedness of this approach was not planned in advance, it appeared to be the only appropriate way to study the precariousness issue as it does not belong to one concrete place. In the words of George E. Marcus (Marcus, 1989, 1995), who firstly brought this topic to a wide recognition in anthropology, the phenomenon of the immigrants' position precariousness and its context are the "discontinuous, multi-sited objects of study" (Marcus, 1995, p. 97). The multi-sited ethnography is defined as a mode that is capable of investigating the nebulous in time and space phenomenon, be it the identity, a cultural meaning or any other object (Hannerz, 2003). Thus it is suitable for the research theme that cannot be explained being focused on just one special location. Matei Candrea (as cited in Falzon, 2016, p. 25) proposed to call that mode as the "arbitrary location" which serves to enlarge the applicability of ethnography to a wider range of topics. The topic of the immigrant precarity in this paper could not have been studied scrutinising just one of the abovementioned sites. Providing a fairly complete and anything comprehensive account of the vulnerability issue would not be possible with just one of the arguments, for instance, from the office area where I noticed employees complaining about the scarce working hours they have got in the working schedule. Some facts required

justification from the other sources of data because some actions could not be just observed at the same place. While doing the research I was not focusing on the constraints that the methodology of single site ethnography inflicts, but I was trying to obtain the needed data from all the sources available to me. The use of information obtained from all of them and from every unexpected location allowed me to find out the detailed account of the foreign workers' unstable and vulnerable position.

Moreover, those locations illustrate one problem from different angles and reciprocally check the inferences found from each of them. A single-site observation in this case would be liable to critique about the subjectivity of the interpretations and would not create a versatile and elaborated analysis due to the speciality of the studied case. As I mentioned above, the workers do not spend long time at the same place such as staff canteen or the staff-only area. The place where they work as the only site for observation would not provide the needed information as well. Hence, the data-source triangulation allows performing a comparison of the results with each other as well as examination of them meanwhile rendering the research topic studied from different angles. In addition, at those locations I used multiple sources of data that were necessary for the correct description of the phenomenon. Ethnographic research is commonly collected out of various data sources, as Creswell (1998, p. 104) states, having the participant observation as the central technique, does not limit the methodology but allows the researcher to use multiple data sources such as interviews, documents, visual materials that supplement the study. The materials would be explained in the next paragraph.

The question of timing, to observe during my working shift or to come on my day off did not have a clear answer in the beginning as well. I firstly decided that I will make observation while working to reduce my influence on other workers' behaviour because for participants I would continue to fulfil the same role of a co-worker. My work is physically demanding, but I do not have to make a lot of intellectual decisions there, which makes it possible to do observation and work simultaneously. The work shift is 5-7 hours long, so the first observation lasted 6 hours. After that, I was totally exhausted and I decided next time to be in the field for only 2 hours and at the day when I am not working. After introducing myself to workers as a researcher and after the first observation, participants already knew what I am doing, and it was not creating that much inconvenience for them at my second visit when I was not working and not wearing the uniform. Moreover, it

simplified the observation in a sense that I was not so tired and could concentrate on it for all 2 hours doing more extensive fieldnotes.

The fact that I firstly was in the field during working and the second time I came on a separate day and for shorter time was a sort of gradual introduction of me to the field. Coming to the field step by step was the most appropriate method, because I could not only transform into the researcher myself but also the participants could change their perception of me as a researcher without a significant change of their behaviour. I continued doing the research combining both observing when I was working and when I was not. During the working shift I was observing for all the length of the shift while focusing on concrete topics of observation which helped to remain focused. When I was coming just for observations, for instance to the staff canteen, I usually did them for about 2 hours. Both types of observation served to fulfil certain roles and both were ultimately very informative and needed.

3.3 Ethics and Subjectivity

Before I could start the field research in the N. Corporation I had to gain the access to it. The fact that I was working there simplified the process a lot as I personally knew people from whom I had to get permission to carry out the research. This process consisted of three stages: getting the permission from the HR manager, then the manager of the department where I was going to make observation and presentation of myself to the participants. I arranged a personal meeting with HR manager and after that with Logistics manager and discussed with them separately the details of my research, such as the topic, confidentiality and anonymity issues and methods. They both allowed me to do the participant observation and after that I gathered a meeting with all the participants that I planned to involve and presented myself to them as a researcher and delivered basic information about the research and its anonymity.

Being a large international company, corporation N. is very careful with sharing the information and confidentiality issues. The HR manager imposed some limitations to how I can carry out the research in there. Firstly, I cannot uncover the name of the corporation and cannot tell precisely the area of its business. Then, we agreed that I would provide the paper to HR manager Henna before publishing to control does it contain any information that cannot be brought out of the corporation walls. Apart from that, at the

interview that I had with Henna she did not allow me to use one part of the data that was already in the analysis. This was documental information that in her opinion was “too ethical to use” that supported one of my arguments, but ultimately was wholly excluded from the study.

In ethnographic studies the reflexivity of the researcher is emphasised (Barnard, 1990; O’Connor, 2011) as it is crucial to open up explicitly what impact our attribution might have on findings. Thus, to keep it clear, I was working in the N. Corporation before the start of the research, so the field was not new for me, and I was not new for the participants, which raises a question did I see the circumstances with the different lens and did I transform from the worker into the researcher?

The techniques that I used are distancing from working routine and focusing my mind on the research, trying to notice interactions happening between the workers and the relevant actions. I also had to elaborate a different perspective and a new gaze from the position of a researcher on the environment I was situated. To be more precise, I had to follow the rule of Malinowski who writes: “Imagine further that you are a beginner, without previous experience, with nothing to guide you” (Malinowski, 1932, p. 4). In the beginning of my first observation I was feeling incompetent and “ill-equipped” (Scott, Hinton-Smith, Härmä, & Broome, 2012, p. 719) because I had nothing to observe. Later on, I managed to elicit the meaning from the simple actions, such as sitting together in the canteen, in terms of Gobo “banalities became the prime subject matter of sociological study; they lost their triviality and acquired rich significance” (Gobo, 2008, p. 43).

Another problem was that workers did not treat me seriously, they made jokes and sometimes asked me “are you observing now?”, or “how is it going with your study?” To deal with those problems, firstly, I focused on making notes of everything I see and formulated a description of the routine actions of the logistics co-worker. Then I tried to apply the techniques of observation such as “de-naturalizing”¹ or “observation of marginal subjects”² (Gobo, 2008, pp. 151–153) and at my second observation I started noticing some of the actions that were worth focusing on and studying more closely. At the same time I tried to elaborate a special behaviour of a researcher (being focused on what I do and

¹ A technique of observation used to recognise the meaning of normally taken for granted and obvious scene.

² Those may be foreigners, novices, cultural misfits, cultural troublemakers

curious about everything that happens around) after which my co-workers stopped asking me questions and laughing and just continued working. As in Susie Scott terms my shyness was situational, so the decision was to cultivate “workplace persona of competent professionalism” (Scott et al., 2012, p. 726) to cover my feelings from the participants which further on made them treat me more seriously.

Apart from transformation into a researcher, another problem of being emotionally too engaged in the field cannot be omitted. I had a problem when I came to Finland of the need to finance my studies, which means that it was necessity to find an employment. I did not have any preferences, I just had to find any job, because the money that I saved when I was in Russia would be enough only for about 8-10 months of living in Finland. The advertisement of my current workplace mentioned that the employee can speak only one of the two languages: Finnish or English. That was the only advertisement that did not require Finnish language skills. That working place not only saved me from financial problems, but also provided me with a place for social and cultural integration. And then, trying to transform from a worker into a researcher I have to keep explicit that I am emotionally engaged in the field. The fact that my workplace helped me does not mean that it played the same role for other immigrant workers, therefore I exclude the case of me from the study and investigate everything without any assumptions about negative or positive influence of the corporation on integration. As Beverley Skeggs puts it I am too involved in the field (Skeggs, 1995, pp. 192–195), and I need to recognize that the origin of my interest lays in my personal worries and emotional experiences. This certainly gives me a motivation to continue the study, but I need to keep in mind that my personal embeddedness may influence the objectivity of the results.

All those hardships could not have been solved beforehand and most of my decisions were made only during the fieldwork, because the circumstances of the field are diverse and unpredictable.

3.4 Data

3.4.1 Data sources

Like many other ethnographic studies this study utilises multiple sources of data. To simplify the presentation of all of them, I would divide them on major sources – those

that play the central role in the research and constitute the predominant part of my data; and minor sources – those that were instrumental for the purposes that emerged during the process of gathering the major data.

The primary and most significant major source is the observation that was made in all the sites inside the store building: market place, staff canteen, office area and the meetings of the personnel (different sites such as office rooms or somewhere in the market area). Observations contributed to the study more than other methods, to be more precise, observing the work process, meeting and recreation activity was the most fruitful method that provided me with the majority of the textual materials suitable for the analysis. The data constitutes the Microsoft Word document textual transcriptions of my jottings that I was making at the field and the written materials that I was typing after every observation day. They include memos about the fieldnotes that had the information that I did not have time to write during the observation. Observation answered most of the questions and provided most plentiful data which made me avoid using the interviews as a primary method.

However, very large part of data was gathered through another major method that is asking participants questions while observing. I was always trying to do this in informal atmosphere as if I was just maintaining the conversation. For instance, questions to my colleagues about their other occupations appeared quite natural while asking them to switch shifts with me. Sometimes, when I could not find that way to ask questions from co-workers I informed them that I need something to complement my research (every one of them already knew that I am doing the study as I informed the participants about it to avoid ethical issues) and then asked a question. I do not call this method interviewing, as those small conversations consisted of a couple spontaneous questions. This data constitutes the transcribed jottings as well that contributed to the observation notes each observation day.

Minor data sources were mostly used for answering the specified questions and all provided the important information that could not have been derived from the field using just observation method. Firstly, it's one interview that I have arranged with the head of HR as the only expert in the questions that I could not answer myself. Questions such as the meaning of the language skills in the recruitment process or the work contract topic were discussed at that interview. The ethical issues of that paper, the probable influences on the image of the corporation were discussed also there. I transcribed the whole 31 minute

interview recording and analysed only the specific parts that were interesting for the research afterwards.

During the two months period I was doing a sort of quantitative research focusing only on counting the number of concrete iterative actions. Studying the topic of migrant precariousness the question of shift extension came up. It was specifically interesting to get to know who most often extends the working time doing overtime work or taking extra shifts, the foreign or Finnish workers. This required just counting those who did it each day. I was counting only when I was working which is 5 times a week and I affirm that two months were enough due to the fact that the timetable for everyone is every week different and all the members of the replenishment department during the two months' time had the same probability to be included in my data. During that time the department was approximately half Finnish and half immigrant which gave them equal chances to be marked as those who extend the shift or take an extra shift. This numerical data contributed to the topic of migrant precariousness significantly, as I have got the grounds to make an assumption for the vulnerability of their position in the corporation.

Another part of data is the announcements that are made for the personnel of the store before its opening. I listened to those announcements and discussed them with sales workers briefly to understand the fluctuations of sales and its relation to the weather changes. This is a minor data that was also fixed in textual form which contributed to the topic of the unpredictability of the need in the workforce. Part-timers' working timetable is dependent on those fluctuations that results in unpredictability of salary which is a part of the precarity topic.

One of the minor parts of data used for this study is the weekly paper printed for all the personnel that is working in the store to keep them informed about the news, vacancies available in all Finnish branches of the corporation and so on. I used this document data for the topic of the English language meaning for the corporation.

One of the peculiarities of the methodological approach to this study and one of the data sources is the technique of "remembering" that I use here. I was employed in the shop since mid-December 2015, but I have started my observation in October 2016 (and continued until July 2017). I decided that I will not start the observation from scratch, trying to abstract my mind from everything I have seen before, on the contrary, I utilised

the past experience. Some of the data includes parts that I did not notice at the moment of observation, but I remembered it from the time I was working there. It means that not being a beginner in the field actually contributed to the research. By recalling, I could look at the past and compare it to what I see right now. For instance, when I observed where workers sit at the break and with whom they prefer to communicate, I could also say how same people formed groups before, was it in the same way 2 months ago as I see right now, or did something change. This method puts me deeper into the field and gives me wider insight of the phenomena I am studying. Moreover, I used this technique for some instrumental questions, those that I did not need to answer with observation, for instance, defining the working routines. I remembered the basic actions of the logistics workers as I myself was doing them in my job.

Finally, the visual data such as schemes and pictures of the staff canteen supported essentially the analysis of the group formation and personnel communication by studying the sitting pattern closely.

3.4.2 Data analysis method

In this paper I adhere to the grounded theory as the strategy of analysis and theory building. To quote Charmaz and Bryant:

Grounded theory is a method of qualitative inquiry in which researchers develop inductive theoretical analyses from their collected data and subsequently gather further data to check these analyses. The purpose of grounded theory is theory construction, rather than description or application of existing theories. (Bryant & Charmaz, 2011, p. 292.)

I must mention that this paper does not follow all the basic principles of the grounded theory methodology in terms of theory building, as I am using the existing theories to support my interpretations. However, the process of data analysis in this research is fully data-driven and the analytic techniques correspond to the grounded theory strategy. From the previous paragraphs it is understood that in the course of the research the study design as well as the topic have been reformulated in accordance with the acquired data. The setting peculiarities and the results of the fieldwork have

contributed to the research plan alteration. The analysis of the textual materials such as the transcripts of the fieldnotes were analysed utilising the grounded theory approach.

Every time after the fieldwork I was writing notes to supplement the observation jottings, in addition, I wrote down my thoughts about the possible interpretation of what I have seen. After every second observation I did line-by-line coding and matched them with preliminary categories. I put all the initial codes to the Excel sheet to make their further analysis more convenient. To structure that large number of codes I ascribed them with appropriate meaning, marking the initial codes with a relative colour, which helped me to group and merge them already at the early stages of the analysis. Some of the initial codes were further suitable for using as a category. For instance, the codes “not allowed”, “listening to music”, “against norms”, “disturbing” and many others have been later aggregated to the category of “norms”. Codes that have remained unmarked have been later excluded from the analysis. When I formulated those categories, I defined the meaning of them in a third column of the Excel sheet shortly. In this way, being constantly involved in both data collection and its analysis, I knew the data fully and I could see what topics were touched upon and what is still to be observed further. So, carrying out the preliminary data analysis straight after the first set of observations allowed me to see what to focus on during the next time in the field.

This cyclical system of the research was described by Hammersly and Atkinson (1995, p. 234) with the metaphor of ethnographic research “funnel” structure, meaning that during the process of data gathering and analysis the focus is progressively clarified and reduced. The data collection and analysis continued in this spiral structure until the saturation point which was achieved when the data started to repeat itself. For instance, the observations in the staff canteen were no longer needed when I have already documented the grouping pattern and that of switching the groups. When I have noticed all their actions to repeat in the same way I have stopped observing that area.

In interpreting the data I rely more on the naturalistic epistemological approach than the constructivist because the data consists mostly of the actions observed but not of the talks and interactions. Grounded theory is known for the adherence to the naturalistic inquiry with its commitment to “tell it like it is” which I assume is the most appropriate way to interpret the data in my study. Making inferences out of what I see in the natural setting minimises the subjectivity of my interpretation which is essential,

given that my personal embeddedness may have an influence on it. Here I try to “capture the social world in description” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 13) and not to misinterpret the data with my or participants’ assumptions.

As a result of those research design developments two more specific research questions were added. Initially the inquiry was very wide and general: how the social integration of immigrant workers proceeds after the start of the employment. Later on, the research was focused on the observation of obstacles to integration that immigrants encounter at their workplace. Firstly, the context in which the integration takes place was unveiled. Secondly, I observed how immigrants and native employees communicate with each other at the workplace.

4 Precarity and work

In this chapter I will present a topic of the precariousness of the foreign workers' position in the corporation. To do so, I will use the data not from one concrete site of observation, but from different places, different times and situations. Being derived from diverse parts of my fieldwork, this data is united by the same topic of migrant precarity that went through the whole research process. The primary objective for this chapter is to answer the research question of the context of immigrant integration. To reach this goal I review the precariousness of immigrant position in the N. Corporation by studying how the corporate structure and immigration controls shape the position of foreigners employed there.

4.1 Part-time workers

According to the words of manager of the replenishment department, all the contracts of co-workers are paid hourly and they are part-time, with a specified amount of hours per week 10, 20 or 25 hours. It means that worker must do on average not less than those hours per week, but one has the right to work more. As one ordinary shift is 5 hours, the 25-hour contract means working 5 days a week. However, the majority of the department are on 10 hour contracts with less clear timetable (will be explained later). The only full-time worker in that department is a manager.

New employees start working with temporary or indefinite time contracts. Fixed-term contracts are very common for that position and especially for summer workers. The contracts of employment rigorously follow the Collective agreement for the commercial sector.

This kind of job is characterised by the atypical working time, which is early mornings, and by the high flexibility requirement as the timetable is always different and can change after being established. Working at this position does not require any qualification, so that most of the workers (except the shift leaders, and managers) are positioned at the periphery of the corporation: the high turnover of the personnel and the part-time contract system attest this inference. As I will explain later, there is inconsistency in the amount of work provided to the employees that results in constant

redistribution of the working hours for the employees and hence in the variation of the salary that affects most the periphery workers.

4.2 Desire to work more and flexibility

The office place (staff-only) of the shop is a site where I firstly witnessed the pattern of migrant behaviour that was showing the characteristics of precariousness, which made me curious about the topic of this study for the first time. The pattern that I am going to describe in this section is related to the economic side of the integration that I observed. To start, I would like to present the extract from my fieldnotes:

After the work is finished all the workers as usual went to watch the timetable, a new week is now available at the board in the office. Some foreigners complain about having too few shifts. Some try to change shifts with each other.

When I drafted those notes at the observation I realised that this kind of situation was not a single one. To be more precise, I remembered that I had often noticed immigrants complaining about the number of working hours they get and trying to get more shifts. This can be explained by the fact that timetable is quite flexible: there is always an opportunity to exchange shifts with co-workers (most often workers can be easily replaced with other employees in this department) which managers most of the time allow to do; fairly big department often needs replacements of those who are ill; the timetable is given to workers a month in advance, however, the exact number of co-workers needed at appropriate day may not always be known beforehand. The exact information about how much work the logistics will have at one day is available only 2 days in advance. This produces the need to call sometimes for more manpower thereby creating the opportunity for workers to get extra shifts that were not planned. Those points constitute channels for all co-workers to earn more money by making their timetable more plentiful of shifts, so that workers who are willing to work more than is written in their contracts are welcomed to do it. The essence of my argument is that workers of foreign background are most often to volunteer for it.

I did not observe this information about the flexibility but I got to know it just by being a co-worker at this position. I changed shifts myself with other co-workers

when I wanted an appropriate day to be spare, I took some extra shifts when the manager asked me: “Are you working tomorrow? Do you want to come?” when I was available the other day. Moreover, there is quite often a need to finish some work, or to assist other departments to complete some straight-forward tasks after the normal 5 hour shift has ended. Asking several workers to come one hour earlier the next day is also a normal procedure, as during 6 hour shift they will be able to complete more work. Obtaining additional manpower is usually communicated with all co-workers at the meetings or in the restaurant or through the internet messenger, with a few exceptions of cases of personal questioning when a worker with appropriate skills is needed.

I had spent two months observing who commonly does this sort of work by watching which worker volunteers or whom the manager (or tiimivetäjä) asks to stay at work for longer (or to come earlier), or by communicating with shift leaders and managers about who was doing extra work the previous day. I was everyday writing the ratio of native and foreign workers who have accomplished extra tasks. My conclusion is that in 8 out of 10 cases (or 80%) those who have done extra work were immigrant workers.

I want to emphasise that doing overtime work depends on a workers’ desire, which means every worker can influence their working hours by showing the willingness and readiness for staying after the shift is finished, starting it earlier or taking extra shift. As I already stated above, that extension of hours worked is controlled by the manager in a way that he asks people to complete some extra tasks. Quite often the announcement is made in the common co-workers’ group created in internet messenger for the entire department which means that all co-workers are equally informed. To illustrate how it happens I will site the dialog that one of the shift leaders had with co-workers:

- One shift available tomorrow, the first answered gets it
- I can come!
- Good. It’s yours

This was a situation when only one extra co-worker was needed just to complement the working team the next day because it was expected to be busy. The situation like this has happened many times and the answer usually comes in the first hour after the announcement was made. Apart from a fast answer, the one who is ready

to take extra shift is writing the answer quite often uses some emotional expressions, like exclamation mark or some emoji such as “😊” that show contented and pleased state of a person. Such situation resembles a competition, that a person have answered first and won an opportunity to earn more money expressing the victory in emotional terms.

This situation is very similar to the study of zero hour contracts in Higher Education institutions that Lopes and Dewan (2014) have carried out in England and Scotland. The problem defined there is that teachers with that kind of contracts are obviously lacking the working hours and as a consequence always declare their availability to do more work. Especially when employees can be easily replaced the part-timers compete to work more and constantly ask or “beg” for extra work, in the words of one interviewee: “There are people lined up, begging to teach the hours you have, and you are absolutely replaceable for the department” (Lopes & Dewan, 2014, p. 34).

The motivation for this struggle to work more is according to Lopes and Dewan the hope to get a full time contract at the place they are employed part-time at the moment. The workers are living in a “perpetual hope that things will eventually improve” (Lopes & Dewan, 2014, p. 34), as it was found the majority of the participants anticipated their fixed-term contract to be renewed and that the conditions of their employment will amend in the future, even if few of them had guarantees for that.

This position of lecturers produces stress and a sense of feebleness that results in sense of isolation which can be also the downside of the immigrants’ precarious position in my studied case. In N. Corporation all members of the replenishment department are employed under the conditions of part-timer. Although they do not have an opportunity to obtain full time contract, they can use other channels to extend the working time and increase the salary that were mentioned above. In addition, it is possible for employees with smaller contracts (10 or 15 hours per week) to improve their position by obtaining a renewed contract with raised working hours. Having 25-hour contract the need to struggle for more shifts is eliminated as the timetable would most often have 5 working days every week. The timetable planning is in fact not that predictable and requires more definition in the next section.

4.3 Timetable planning and a employees' impact on it

Apart from the extra work that emerge one or two days in advance and announced through the internet, it is very common that employees have a lot more shifts planned in the timetable that are determined by the contract. For instance, those who are on a 10 hour contract work 15-25 hours a week, or those who have 20 hour contract actually do 30.

I got to know which contracts the workers have simply by asking them in person and I also used the timetable of working shifts for the replenishment department as data. Comparing the workers with the same kind of contracts I have noticed, that one group of workers have exactly the amount of shifts planned in the timetable determined by the contract, but some others tend to have more shifts planned than they should according to their contract. The trend is that the latter group does not always get a stable number of shifts per week, it varies each week and the only rule is that on average it will be 1,5 – 2 times more than is determined by the contract (like in the examples above). Surprisingly, absolute majority of cases have relation to the nationality of an employee, to be more precise, those who greatly exceed the contract hours are immigrant workers.

The question why it happens was one of the topics of interview that I arranged with HR manager Henna who is in charge of recruitment and staff planning. In her words the reason for having more shifts planned than is written in the contract is always a response to the employees' need. She said “we can always offer you more, and you can do as much as you want, with certain limitations of course...” which is in her words based on the corporate policy. The value is that they always try to fulfil the need of an employee for more work, and as Henna clarified, they can “make some adjustments” to the contract in the future. She also emphasised that the resource planning and contract changing processes are always strictly directed by the Collective agreement.

Actually, contract's changing is a difficult process which may require re-planning of resources in concordance with the HR manager and even sometimes opening a vacancy officially. So, it is a time and resource consuming process that does not proceed very quickly, which means that an employee, who wants to work more ought to continue exceeding the hours that are mentioned in the contract for a long time before he can apply for a contract renewal.

When I noticed that immigrant workers commonly work more than they should according to contracts, I started wondering why it happens. It is particularly interesting that this group of workers anticipate from the part-time job they have more than their native colleagues and that they continuously try to benefit from the given contract as much as they can.

The interpretation of this finding has come to my mind accidentally without a proper investigation of that question because I already was aware of the information that is significant here. As I was doing the study after I have worked at this corporation for quite a long time, I already knew my colleagues quite well, at my position of a shift leader I have to know the workers, at least some information about them is necessary to organise the work process effectively. For instance, when I arranged the working destinations for everybody for the next day and I need extra workers, I should know who is available and who has another job or studies that day. It is very common to have a second occupation (other work or study place) for the employees in this logistics team, however, not for all. By the time I was writing this chapter of the study, I already knew almost all replenishment co-workers' other occupations. To get to know the rest I just asked about it in informal conversation to make sure that I have gathered full data and I build a correct interpretation.

Comparing the Finnish and immigrant co-workers on a 10 hour contract, I have learned that all Finnish employees with few exceptions (the population of team is changing, sometimes there were no exceptions) have another occupation. In most of cases, the job in this corporation, in the words of one of participants, is a "secondary job". The primary is commonly a full-time studying or another part-time job. The different job is usually more stable, most of those with a second job, are working in the N. only on weekends. Immigrants on the contrary rely on the part-time job they have here which is for most of them the only occupation. Roughly one third part of foreign co-workers were employed elsewhere or studied.

Hence, having the part-time position as the most important occupation, immigrants try to elicit as much as possible from the only source of income they have. Unlike their Finnish colleagues, immigrants are lacking channels to improve their position through the other job or through the education and they rely on position that they have already managed to acquire. Furthermore, their current position offers a 25-

hour part-time contract as a highest step of growth (if he is not the one capable of becoming a manager), which provides neither the security nor the predictability of their future. Apart from being unable to obtain a full-time job, there are difficulties with planning their future and with access to welfare benefits that will be defined in next sections.

4.4 Wage unpredictability

As I stated above, the difference between immigrants' and Finnish workers' position is that immigrants rely on the only occupation and that they have to deal with the poor conditions of it. This section is focused more precisely on the planning difficulties and unpredictability of their employment. The employees' salary, being hourly based, is dependent on appropriate day occasional opportunity, such as days when manager calls for more workers for the next day or suggests an overtime work.

The instability in working hours is the most manifest comparing summer and winter time. During the summer time the sales are increasing dramatically which requires more employees in general as well as more work for the logistics team in particular. The amount of work for logistics team is proportional to the amount of sales in a way that the higher the sales are, the more goods need to be delivered to the shop to fill all the empty shelves. This resembles very much the basic economic law that the more is demand for service, the more is supply. This seasonal fluctuation is widely studied as one of the main macroeconomic factors of business. The seasonal fluctuations are not just positively correlated with many macroeconomic variables, but constitute significant sources of variation of them "including consumption, investment, government purchases, employment, and the money stock" (Glasner, 1997, p. 612).

To fulfil the needs of market and due to summer vacations there is a more need in additional workforce and commonly the summer workers are hired. Apart from that, a lot of the employees are working more than usual, having their contracts changed for summer. Thus, the timetable is planned in a way that they have more shifts than for instance in the winter time. Moreover, as I have noticed during the observation, there is a lot more opportunity to extend the working hours by doing extra work before and after the ordinary shift (ordinary shift hours are 5-10 am). The contract changes, for example when the contractual raise from 10 per week to 20, happen always just for the summer

period. It means that from September co-worker returns back to ten-hour agreement. Those summer contract alterations are available to all logistics co-workers: the manager commonly asks everybody about their desire to work more during the summer and changes contracts without interviewing them separately. Regardless of the fact was the contract changed or not, most logistics employees as a rule exceed contractual hours at the summer period.

The seasonal fluctuation of the amount of work is a generalisation which cannot predict accurately the salary that an employee will receive for one or another month. The instability of the amount of work is emphasised by very significant weather conditions impact on sales. There is a tendency that the number of customers varies greatly depending on the weather: if it is sunny outside people are very often to opt for another recreation activity than shopping. Rainy days, on the contrary, attract more customers to the shop. The dependency of the business income on weather is a known economic regularity. According to Muller and Grandi (2000), the meteorological research institutions evaluated that 80% of business activity worldwide is directly or indirectly exposed to impact of weather. Some of the sectors, such as ice-cream manufactures or sport-goods retail are more dependent than others, but the influence of it to other sectors also cannot be underestimated.

This information about the correlation of the weather and sales in the studied corporation is obtained from two different sources: firstly the daily announcements made in the shop for staff (usually made before the shop is open) about the sale outcomes, the planned sales for a day and what was reached, and the number of customers that have been in the previous day; secondly, the shopkeepers (the managers of different shop departments) to whom I had chance to talk. As the shop is divided on different parts, each of those departments have own managers. The logistics team often has to communicate with them about the work-related questions, such as mistakes in the deliveries. And sometimes there are also discussions about the successful or not sales day, where they mention the reasons that they think is the most relevant. Quite often the shopkeepers define the sales outcome as a result of fine or poor weather conditions, which I can verify with what I hear in the announcements. To be more precise, I compared were the planned sales reached or not and what the weather was like at the

previous day. As a result of those observations, I can assert that this correlation actually takes place in that shop, especially in the summer.

Therefore, the amount of working hours an employee gets depends on the factors that he is not capable of predicting: the weather, the sales, and the decision of the manager to suggest extra work. And finally, immigrant workers cannot forecast the planning of the timetable, which is never stable and is fairly frequently changed manually. Working in a corporation structured to have only part-time contracts for the logistics workers immigrants are economically vulnerable to any global change such as seasonal fluctuation that might affect the business. If the sales experience a sharp decline, immigrants will have fewer hours and as a consequence would be subject to financial hardships. Contrasted to them, Finnish workers, being less dependent on a part time job in that corporation, are less prone to that kind of changes.

Getting back to the planning opportunity, the employees who are willing to increase their earnings are living in a constant “waiting for more work” process. This is best seen during the summertime when the shift time extension happens regularly as well as the extra co-workers are called to come one or two days in advance, which puts them in the position of waiting for any chance to increase the income from the job they have as the only source. The reason for the eliminated planning possibility lies in the structure of the corporation. The department that is structured only of the part-timers and a manager has all the risks of business transferred to the workers, who face all the unpredictability of the market sales themselves. Then, if the sales experience a sharp decline, it affects the part-timers by the most.

4.5 Limited social advantages

The phrase that employees are always offered to work more “with certain limitations of course” that I quoted from the interview in one of the previous sections, refers to the fact that increasing the hours worked can only satisfy one demand of increasing monthly salary but not others. The central limitation is that holiday money remain at the level that is set up by the contract, not by the actual hours worked so it is not increased in the same way as the wage. It is very interesting that the HR manager raised this question in interview which means that she is aware of the employment

conditions and its' drawbacks when an immigrant is working more hours than the contract determines.

Let's assume that one worker has a 10 hour contract and he actually does about 20 hours per week. When he goes on a holiday, the holiday money is paid as if he has been working 10 hours per week as it is established in the contract. The vacation being a very large loss of money for a worker makes it more beneficial not to have any holidays to secure him from the decrease of the income.

Another side of the limited social advantages is sick leave money. If a member of a logistics team is ill, he is paid just for the shifts that he did not do (5-10 am) with no extra minutes that he could earn. Comparing to the hours that all workers without exception usually do, being paid just for 5 hour shift is quite a serious reduction of the money that one earns. In spite of the fact that the formal shift ends at 10:00 am, all the employees finish the work only when the shop is empty of the boxes, packages and products delivered that day and the rubbish is thrown away which usually altogether takes from 15 to 45 minutes (which is paid work as well) for everybody and requires them to stay after the shift and finish the work. In addition to that, workers lose opportunity to extend their working time in a way that I explained above, or they cannot do extra shift and obviously do not receive money from them when they are sick.

The sick leave makes a cut for the salary of everybody as it covers only the hourly salary, not the supplements that are paid to the employees. As the work process starts at 5 or at 4 am, the night supplement is paid for hours earlier than 6 am that increases the monthly salary seriously. In Finland Sundays and National Holidays are double paid, but this supplement is also not paid if one is on the sick leave. As a result, workers and primarily immigrants tend to come to work notwithstanding their sickness to protect themselves from the drop in their salary. I would interpret that position of immigrant workers as not economically and socially safe and unstable. I should emphasise that I am claiming the position of immigrant workers as unsafe due to the fact that they are using the opportunities to extend their shifts significantly more than Finnish workers and those who are making two or three times more hours than they have as a minimum set in the contract are mostly immigrant workers. Thus, the salary of foreign employees is less stable than the salary of their Finnish colleagues.

The lack of protection that is illustrated by the restricted health insurance of part-timers constitutes another hardship for immigrant workers. They are insured by the employer, but only concerning the work-related sickness, which means that if they get a sort of injury when they are not at work, they have to find other funding to receive a treatment. Or if a worker has some disease which still allows him to work, or he simply needs a medical examination, he cannot complete it at the cost of the employment insurance. This may create a serious financial problem especially for immigrants, as they might not be secured by the Finnish Social Security Agency called Kela. In this position they might be subject to serious expenses, as the medical services are highly expensive if not supported by the work insurance or Kela.

4.6 Migration controls

The drawbacks of immigrants' position that were outlined above can be generalized for all immigrants in the logistics department, as I observed most of them being in those situations of insecure and unstable labour regardless of differences in their backgrounds and their status in Finland. By status I mean the types of residence permit or a citizenship and the right to work they have in Finland which is more individual, as everybody has moved to Finland for the different reasons. I did not have an objective to analyse each case individually closely as I did not plan to have interviews with immigrants, so in this section I will not focus on each participants' history but will outline some differences of immigrants' positions that can be observed in the corporation.

Finland is a Nordic Welfare State known for its protection of the well-being and high level of social security and equality. It provides a vast support to its' residents through extensive social benefits concerning the health, unemployment, disability coverage and other benefits (Jørgensen & Meret, 2012, pp. 289–292). In Finland Kela is responsible for all that sort of support that is an independent social security institution with its own administration and finances supervised by the parliament (Kela, 2017a).

The amount of support that can be offered to the immigrant by the Kela is determined by his residence permit type which makes positions of foreigners very different from one another. Immigrants have the right to work in Finland if they obtain a residence permit. This right might be restricted or unlimited depending on the type of it.

If a foreigner has moved to Finland for studying, he obtains a student residence permit which has a limitation of 25 working hours per week, and for exceeding of this limit one can be given a fine (Finnish Immigration Service, 2017c). Other residence permit types do not have a restriction of hours one can spend working. The residence permit based on work can be without any restrictions or can have the restriction for the type of work that a person can accomplish in Finland. This means that an immigrant is allowed to work in only one professional field that is his current job, which significantly limits his mobility. Finnish Immigration Service writes

If your new job is in another professional field, you must apply for a new residence permit for an employed person. You are not allowed to work in the new professional field until you have been granted the relevant permit. (Finnish Immigration Service, 2017b)

Those restrictions are related only to temporary residence permits, the permanent residence permit type allows immigrants to change the profession and provides the right to claim social benefits from Kela. In addition, those citizens who are living in Finland permanently are covered under the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme of Finland (Kela, 2017b). However, those, who are not considered as “permanent” cannot be insured by Kela. Students as well as those with a temporary work contracts do not have the right to reside in Finland permanently, hence they are not included in that scheme.

The Welfare system being built on the basis of residency is exclusive in essence (Könönen, 2017). As I mentioned in the first chapter, large part of migrant workers are primarily coming to Finland not for the purpose of working, but for family reunification, studying and so on. A big number of the migrant workers are temporary migrants or those who have their working right restricted. It is possible that their position does not improve and immigrants are left out of the Finnish Social Security system for a very long time such as students, whose bachelor plus master studies last 6 years.

The immigration law that regulates the immigrants’ residency right distinguishes between different groups of immigrants and assigns them with different

access to labour market. The Welfare system here intertwines with the immigration controls providing or restricting immigrants' access to the social benefits. The universal welfare state guarantees the equal social rights and "undifferentiated basic social security" (Könönen, 2017, p. 13) for all the residents of the country. However, the access to welfare benefits, to public resources and the labour market is divergent for permanent and temporary residents of Finland.

The example of the seasonal fluctuation defined earlier in this chapter illustrates most evidently how the position of an immigrant can vary. In mathematical terms, this seasonal inconsistency can be characterised as having extremum points. The summer time is usually characterised as maxima, but there are slow seasons when the sales are commonly anticipated to stagnate at lower levels. Apparently, at those minima times the need for workers decrease, leaving the 10-hour contract workers without any extra work which causes a significant two- or even threefold salary drop. At those times, workers might not even earn enough money for living.

Usually permanent residents of Finland are secured from difficulties with income by the benefits provided by Kela. Kela is defined on its official website as an institution that "provides social security coverage for Finnish residents" (Kela, 2017a). This coverage includes family benefits, health insurance, rehabilitation, basic unemployment security, housing benefits, social assistance benefit, financial aid for students and basic pensions.

For the permanent resident of Finland the income can be secured, for instance, by the housing allowance and social assistance that are counted on the basis of the monthly income (including wage and all other assets). If a person cannot pay for his flat rent he may apply for a housing benefit. If an income does not cover "some of the basic necessities of life" (Kela, 2018) a person can apply for social assistance. Those benefits in some way secure permanent residents from the money shortages that happen when the salary drops down and makes the income relatively more balanced. However, the income of temporary residents of Finland including part of immigrant workers of the studied corporation depends fully on the salary they receive due to the fact that they are not entitled to any of those benefits. This underlines the difference of their position from the Finnish nationals and those who live in Finland permanently.

This chapter has two significant results for this research. First is that the position of logistics co-workers and especially immigrants is seemingly precarious. They are all employed under a part-time contracts and the condition of their employment is characterised by the lack of planning opportunity, high flexibility requirement, and the unpredictability of salary. Unequal distribution of social benefits and other resources evidently differentiates the immigrants' position and especially temporary residents from that of Finnish nationals. In addition to that, the timing of the shift and a chaotic schedule indicate this kind of employment as atypical. Those arguments justify that immigrant workers have a low level of economic participation.

Second result is that the observation has not only gained information about the structural environment of immigrant integration, but also the information on how foreigners take a responsive action to stabilise their situation. Participants were flexible in doing extra work, were taking every opportunity to work overtime, were showing to the managers their readiness to take more shifts and were struggling to obtain better employment contracts. Those efforts were made in order to secure their rather vulnerable situation, largely in response to the existent employment conditions.

5 Doing distance

In the previous chapter I outlined the context of the immigrant integration and described participants' relative actions taken to overcome the structural constraints. This chapter is more focused on social part of integration, specifically, the group formation and communication processes. I define how the social distance is made by the participants' actions and how the immigrant group is segregated. The goal of this chapter is to provide a detailed account of immigrant-native interaction which is done by thorough investigation of one observation site: the staff canteen.

5.1 Cultural characterisation

Having started with imprecise gaze I was observing all the actions that participants were taking. When I firstly went to the field in the market area during working, the topic of following the common rule captured my attention. This happened because a few participants' repetitive actions were going against common regulations. For instance, there is a rule that employees cannot wear earphones while working according to safety instruction because of the forklifts used inside the store. All co-workers must also wear a safety jacket to be highly visible for the surfer or forklift drivers. Those rules are essential and it is responsibility of managers to introduce and control them, however, some employees (all of them have foreign background) use earphones or even take off the safety jacket regardless of their awareness about those regulations.

Another example is being late for work at the start of the shift or after the break time. As I noticed, some employees are coming late systematically for 5-10 minutes. Once I tried to ask in informal atmosphere why Amar was late:

- hay, man, seems like you are late, isn't it?
- no-no, I logged in exactly at 5:00

He was sure, that he did it right and when he logged in to the system that counts the hourly salary with electronic key on time, he is not late. Though, after doing so, he have spent about 5-10 minutes in the staff restaurant drinking coffee apart from the minutes that he was walking from the changing room to the department downstairs. Lateness for work after the breaks happens mostly to the same foreign employees but

not with the same frequency as coming late in the morning. After the break co-workers are very often coming at exactly the same time and leaving back to work together. However, if they have come to the staff restaurant at slightly different times, some foreign workers tend to spend more time at the breaks than their Finnish colleagues. Being late is a problem that sometimes gets publicity, so that the manager organises the meeting to remind the team how long is the break. Those to whom these talks are directed are mostly co-workers of a foreign background.

Another example difference in regulations following that I witnessed during my observation in the market area is how the subordination is respected by foreign workers and Finns. At one of the observation sessions there was a short meeting of the replenishment team that the manager of it organised to deliver some important information for everybody. The meeting is usually arranged so that the manager is making an announcement and the others are listening and asking questions. While the manager was speaking one worker was disturbing the announcer with some noises because he did not stop working to listen, by which he was making the manager increase the volume of his voice. He was moving some boxes creating loud noises scratching it by the flour as if there was no meeting and he just continued working without paying attention to the manager and meeting. This situation looked like the illustration of no respect to the manager and to the common etiquette that when one is speaking the other should listen without disturbing. Interestingly, all those actions were taken only by immigrant employees.

Those details show a few patterns that differ the immigrant population of the replenishment team from the rest; however, they do not suffice to say that those immigrants are not integrated to the Finnish society. It is difficult to make conclusions about the obstacles to immigrants' integration using just this data as I cannot say that the phenomenon is pervasive, neither can I affirm that the those actions are taken due to their foreign background. In other words those cultural traits are not catchall, they do not involve all the foreign workers in that team, but only some of them.

At this point I realised that I have to adjust my focus to something more comprehensive, to the phenomenon that is not just an exception from the rule, but that constitute the rule itself. Next sections will be more focused on the consistent patterns

that I have observed in the corporation, that involve the whole team, and did not change over the time that I have spent in the corporation doing the research.

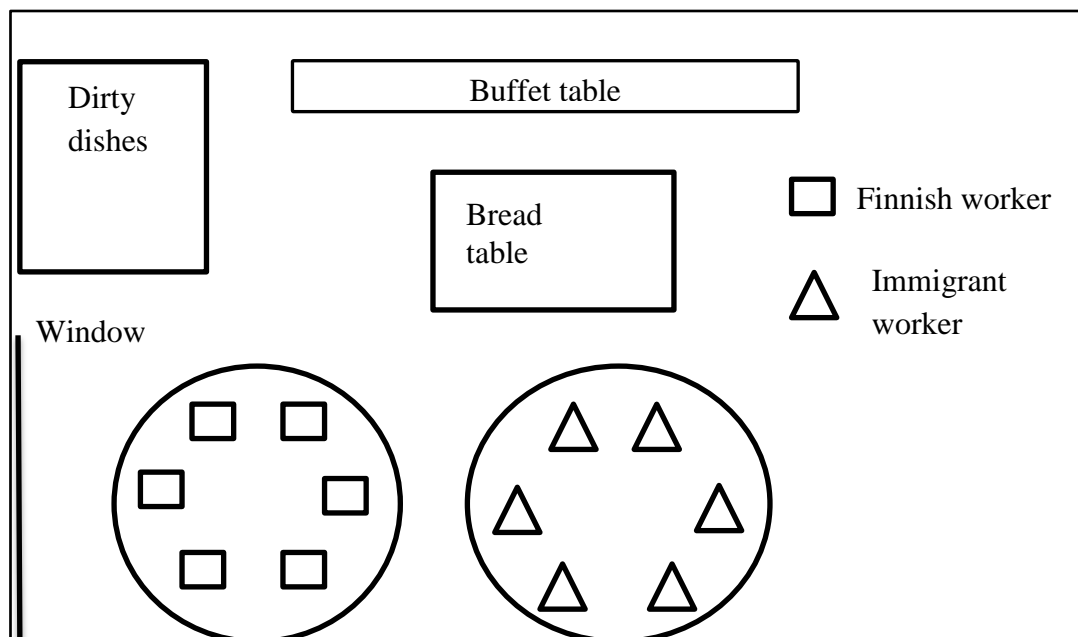
5.2 Group formation

Having shifted my focus to the obstacles on the process of integration, next observation was more focused on the distancing and separation processes that constitute a consistent exhaustive pattern of behaviour. Here I will define the data from the observation site where all co-workers usually take rest from work, eat and talk in informal atmosphere – the staff canteen (or restaurant), which is the most informative place of fieldwork for this topic. There employees spend breaks for breakfast and lunch as well as stay after work to have some rest drinking coffee and making conversations. This section is focused on the consistently repeated pattern of how the participants were choosing their places to sit and making conversations during the breakfast of the replenishment team which is every day from 7:40 to 8:00 am.

By observing and remembering what I have seen in the past I can summarise that the replenishment team as a rule is having the breakfast at the same 2 or 3 tables and between those tables there is always a distinction on the basis of language that people speak there and nationality (picture 1). As a rule, immigrants choose to sit at one table together and speak English while Finnish workers gather at another table and the conversation is always in Finnish there. This pattern of physically “doing distance” has caught my attention in the beginning of my fieldwork so I decided to investigate it more thoroughly. Very often 1 or 2 Finns also join the “English speaking table” (see appendix 1), that is outlined in a separate section further on called “Table switching”.

My preliminary interpretation for that language and national distinction is that there are leaders of Finnish or English speaking groups who are the most talkative and constitute the “cores” of those groups who initiate this sitting pattern. To understand it more deeply, I will start with describing how the canteen is organised and how workers are coming and making a choice of location to sit.

Picture 1. The most common sitting scheme in the staff restaurant



The breakfast is served in buffet style, so that everybody who comes there takes a tray, plate and in one line take food, then pays for it and finds a sit. It means that members of the staff choose places to sit according to their own wish and relative to the other colleagues that are already sitting there. In that situation people tend to choose the same places every day. The break is always at 7:40 but it is not so strict, hence workers are not coming at exactly the same time. Some follow the time attentively during working and always come earlier than others. Each language group (English and Finnish) has two or three persons that regularly come earlier than others and choose the place without relating to anybody, when there is nobody sitting yet. Interestingly, those people who usually come first always with no exception prefer the same tables (that I call English-speaking table and Finnish-speaking table) unless there is some stranger from the department other than replenishment team unexpectedly occupying the places “booked” for the logistics. After that, other workers come and join the groups they feel comfortable sitting with, routinely forming two different language-national groups.

Two Finnish employees that tend to come earlier than others speak little of English and commonly prefer not to use it at all. When I saw them trying to speak some English, they looked uncomfortable, spending quite long time to find words to express themselves. All workers know each other rather well and those Finnish workers remember if their colleagues speak Finnish or not. If they know that an immigrant

speaks at least some level of Finnish language, they would always use Finnish language for the conversation. There are also some workers who do not speak Finnish at all, with whom their Finnish colleagues (all those who speak little of English) prefer not to contact at all. It is yet difficult to conclude who is not willing to contact with which as the foreigners who do not speak Finnish are also rarely approaching their Finnish colleagues to ask help at work or to share a table in the canteen. Anyhow I assume that those who speak only one of the languages and are coming early play an important role in forming the groups distinguished by the language.

However, the English-speaking early coming foreigners have a command of Finnish sufficient for work-related or other questions and they prefer not to use it during the break time. At the time of working if one needs to make a conversation with another everybody commonly stays with the same preference of language that they use during the breaks, but they can change it when needed.

The division of the English and Finnish tables is quite strict concerning the language that is used there, as I have very rarely noticed anybody speaking English at the Finnish table and vice versa. In spite of the fact that the national differentiation is not total and one or two Finns are commonly sitting also in the English table and some immigrant workers from time to time join “Finnish table”, the *unspoken rule* of the language used at the appropriate table remains consistent. Two symbolised tables such as “Finnish speaking table” and “English speaking table” during some period of time have become associated with an appropriate behaviour: “if you prefer to speak Finnish you should sit at the table near the window”. This creates a demand for those who switch tables to practice other language which they do not always use.

To substantiate the existence of the distance between the groups I would like to introduce a case of breaking the rule that happened on the day of observation, with the help of the extract from the fieldnotes.

Usually people sit at the same tables depending on the language they are going to speak during the break. There are two tables, one is near the window which is used almost always by the same group of Finnish-speaking people. And another is close to it, but there are usually people who are open to speak English. I have

rarely seen a person who does not speak English sitting in the “English table” and vice versa.

Today was interesting situation. At the time when the replenishment team was coming for a break about 7:40, a man was sitting at the English table, who is not from our co-workers. He had a strange uniform, different from any other uniforms. I suppose it was a person responsible for the security check which was done this week.

Because of him, the first coming English-speaking worker from the replenishment team sat to the table near the window. Then Sara who does not speak English at all chose a lonely sit far from that area, at the other side of the restaurant which was strange because that person is quite talkative and rarely sits alone. Then both tables became mixed (after the security worker left). At both tables were people that prefer Finnish speaking and English.

The case with a person who is not from logistics and took a sit at the “English speaking table” creating a mix of Finnish and English speakers, shows that there is not only a symbol of an appropriate language, but also a symbol of an appropriate profession of people who can take these two tables, like sales, logistics, or safety and security co-worker. None of the logistics co-workers were sitting at the table before the security-responsible person left.

The illustration of the broken rule substantiates the existence of distance between the groups. The fact that Sara has chosen the place far from the others tells us that she feels more comfortable sitting alone than sitting at the table where a lot of immigrant workers now would most probably speak English. This case illustrates how important for Sara it is to keep *distance* between her and immigrant workers.

Moreover, the example of broken rule shows that the environment where the English language is used marginalises the Finnish-only speakers. For the person who does not speak (or avoids speaking) English, sitting alone is more comfortable and safe, than having breakfast at the place, where she would need to use disliked language. This at the end excludes her from nationally mixed logistics co-worker groups and all those, whose speaking language is English. Other Finns did not mind to sit that time at the mixed tables, as they do speak at least some English.

I assume this example as well as a pattern of sitting together every day only with Finns is an action of distancing from the foreign workers. It means that when the Finnish nationals are *doing distance*, they become separated not only from English language, but from another group of immigrant workers. The majority of immigrants do speak at least some level of Finnish language and they can make a conversation with Finnish nationals on both of the languages. Thus, the action of daily choice of the location in the canteen is an action of self-ascription, to use the terms of Barth (1994, p. 12). By acting consistently in like manner sitting together with the colleagues of the same nationality, by being reluctant to speak to foreigners and by the use of the language Finnish nationals distinguish between their group and the group of “others”. Same is relevant to say about the other group of employees with a foreign background.

In the study of Wieder (1974) the residents of half-way house were doing social distance from the staff by gathering together at another location. This was done during the free time activities at any place where the gathering is possible. The distancing was complicated by the use of Spanish language that the staff did not speak. Wieder claimed that this sort of physical self-isolation contributed to social distance between two groups. For the case of N. Corporation the conflict of languages is not that explicit, as both groups speak at least some level of each other’s language, but the sameness of the group-forming pattern has clearly shown the existence of the separation processes. Having territorial counterparts was observed in this case similarly to the study of Lawrence Wieder, yet in a somehow conditional sense. The territorial distinction was not total and could be observed only at one of three places where the members of the groups encountered – staff canteen. Existence of the groups’ territories was seen only in the restaurant due to the fact that the social gathering is possible only there. There is no other place in the store, where I could observe participants having rest, as they commonly spend all their breaks at the restaurant.

5.3 Table switching

I mentioned above that there are some people who can join both tables depending either on the places available or on their own preference. I have observed those people many times when I was also working to understand why it happens and how the conversation is built at those tables when such a change occurs. To do so, I had

to switch tables myself, when I see that somebody has taken a sit on unusual for him place, I joined that table and followed the discussion sometimes taking part in it.³

As I have noticed, there are usually two sorts of situation that tend to repeat over again. Firstly, when Finns join the English dominated table they are most often involved in lively conversation as they feel comfortable with switching into English language and talking to immigrants (those are usually the same people who speak English fluently). Sometimes they join English speaking table when the Finnish one is already full, sometimes they do so when it is still not full. Those are always the same three employees who are ready to switch tables from Finnish to English and back.

Another situation is when immigrant worker joins Finnish table. It most commonly happens only when the English table has no place to sit. This usually had two different outcomes: firstly, some of the immigrants are from time to time engaged in the conversation held in Finnish and look more or less comfortable with sitting there; secondly, some of immigrants are just sitting and eating not saying a word to his Finnish colleagues. In both of the cases, the foreigner who joined Finnish-speaking group is in a position of an outsider, being very rarely or not at all involved in the conversation. Interestingly, some of the foreign research participants do not have the language barrier as they speak Finnish rather fluently, however, the position in the discussion still remain segregated. This means that the language certainly constitute an influential characteristic of the group, but not the only basis for the division. Hence, if a foreigner intends to shift own position in relation to the boundary, to decrease the distance between him and the native population group, learning the local language would not suffice to eliminate those differences.

Employees work mostly individually and they all are coming for a break at a slightly different time every day and as I mentioned above, the population of the logistics department varies every day. As a result, groups at the breakfast tables are always formed differently. It is rarely possible to sit together with the same friend. Often people need to choose a different group to sit with just because the places are taken. Here I want to quote the fieldnotes to present a conversation that happened when

³ Before initiating the research I most often found myself being a member of English-speaking group. Sometimes I joined the other table to practice my Finnish skills.

Max, the co-worker who most of the time comes first for the break and sits only with the English-speaking group, has come too late and the English table was wholly booked.

Max firstly approached his favourite table and then started to go further to the next one, when he heard the reaction of the colleagues from that table:

Neil: Max hay, it's your spot

Pekka: Do not leave, come here!

Neil: I am gonna move to another place, man, you sit here

Then Neil stood up and took place at another table to make a free spot for Max who sat at his usual place and said: "I am the *king* of this table!"

Interestingly enough, Max is one of the English table group leaders that I claimed in the previous section. Although the group had formed itself before he came to the restaurant, he remained ascribed to it. As a matter of fact this situation clearly illustrates the existence of the group that has its own localisation characteristic, which is exactly that table in the restaurant. Moreover, it is an example of ascription of Max to the group of English speakers by the other group members. Situations when somebody cannot fit into the table usually just make him sit elsewhere, but in this case, co-workers perceived the fact that Max will not be a part of a group as something unusual. Their active reaction to his absence at the territory of their group and the act of standing from the table and letting him sit instead shows that the group clearly ascribes Max to the group of English-only table. Apart from that, certain identities of the group members are shown to be stronger than that of others. Neil in that case showed a weaker self-identification with the English-speaking group than Max. As a matter of fact, this conversation shows the existence of the boundary as colleagues can both ascribe themselves to certain group and identify others as ascribed or not ascribed to the same group.

This section has shown that there are groups with certain characteristics where employees can ascribe themselves and others. It also illustrated the relative fluidity of the boundary as the division into two groups is not total. Members of both groups can cross the boundaries that are in fact mutable. However, I argued previously, that those groups are very persistent over time and they reconstitute themselves regardless of the

changes in each groups' population. For 1,5 years half of the logistics team was changed, but the group forming pattern remained consistent over the time.

Enduring nature of the division between the group of Finnish nationals and foreigners may be presented here as a social structure that frames the social relations of the team. This brings up a problem of structure and subject relation that constitutes one of the fundamental questions of historical materialism. I did not have a purpose to theorise on it thoroughly in this paper, albeit I give a definition of the agency concept adopted from Emirbayer and Mische (1998) and interpret the data from the pragmatist perspective of agency research. As I argued for the relevance of the agency-oriented approach in the study of boundary making, the actions of participants in the group formation process are interpreted as agent-driven. Therefore, the choice of the same places in the restaurant by the participants can be named a habitual practice. To use the characterisation of agency by the Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 975), its "iterational" dimension is represented in the repeated sitting pattern of the logistics team. Actors recall and apply the selected "more or less tacit or taken-for granted schemas of action" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 975) that they had already constructed in the past. This replicated choice of where to sit that leads to group forming became schematized as a workers' habit which reproduced itself in the future.

The case of table switching that has been explained in this section is a manifestation of deliberative action taken by the participants. Decision to have breakfast in an unusual place (e.g. with other group) represents an example of the previously developed action scheme being challenged. For example, when a foreigner joins a Finnish-speaking table trying to overcome the boundary, he distances himself from the traditional action habit, which constitutes a creative action. Here, immigrant worker is inventive and he reformulates his routinized actions which is a display of so-called "projective dimension of human agency" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 984). Hence, both the processes of the boundary making and maintenance as well as how they try to overcome it are viewed as agency-driven.

The theoretical thinkers emphasise the fact that agency-driven action is always taken in response to the existing structure (Archer, 2003, pp. 2–5). In the previous chapter, I discussed how immigrants' position in the corporation is framed by the corporate structure and how unequal access to the welfare benefits distinguishes

immigrants' vulnerable state from that of Finnish nationals. I presented those as contextual matters of integration that determine its process. This distinguished and seemingly precarious position of immigrants' in the corporation and in the society in general, constitutes a pre-existent structure for that particular case.

5.4 Restaurant after work

When the logistics team including warehouse and replenishment finish their shift they quite often stay in the restaurant to have some drinks before going home or to another job. This group-forming activity does not involve each worker and happens almost every day because of other occupations or a desire to stay and talk to colleagues.

I was observing this by simply staying after work, joining some logistics workers and maintaining the conversation. I tried to perform in the same way as others: joining the group, sitting at the place that they sit and talking about the same sort of topics. I noticed that those who stay commonly form a group of 3-5 workers and spend about 10-25 minutes talking to each other and relaxing. The localisation of this kind of group was either at the "English-speaking table" or sometimes at the sofa area (the comfortable places).

As I noticed, this group has similarities to the immigrant dominated group which is formed during the breakfast, such as the localisation of sitting and the language of conversation which is always (with very rare exceptions) English. However, it is little smaller (at the breakfast there is always about 6 people) and the themes of conversation are different, which makes me consider this group as special. When the shift is finished, workers discuss mundane topics, such as films and TV shows, politics, share some funny videos of "gifs", talk about leisure activities or hobbies and so on. The difference is that the discussion of work-related questions is very concise and happens very seldom. Here is the example of one which sometimes happens there:

- How many trucks tomorrow, Neil?
- Two plus two
- okay

It is very common that the dialog consists of just a single question and answer after which it ends when one receives the information. That sort of conversation about how busy the team will be the next day can be observed in both groups formed during

the break and after work, but unlike the breakfast time discussions, this one gets no support and no further continuation. Conversely, the questions that are not related to work provoke much more lively debate.

The group that is quite often formed after the end of the working shift resembles the one that is formed at the “English speaking table” during the breakfast with the difference of the size and conversation style, which is more friendly than work-related, as it is about mundane topics. Moreover, those who stay for talking most often are not in a hurry to go to another job or any kind of occupation, which means that this group is characterised by having this job as the only occupation.

What is particularly relative to the topic of integration is that the group formed after work almost never has Finnish co-workers joining them. This group forming pattern should be analysed in comparison to the one that occur during the break time. Doing this kind of analysis also makes visible the difference of the circumstances of the choice that everybody make joining the group. During the breakfast all the co-workers go to the same place because there is no other place to eat, to have a drink and take a rest than the canteen. They sit with each other because they know their own department workers better than others. After the work is finished, on the contrary, there is a choice where to have rest and eat and with whom to communicate, or not to communicate at all. Every day they make a choice, do they want to spend some time in the canteen and talk to their colleagues or to go somewhere else. The fact that foreign workers socialise only with each other at their free time after work is particularly interesting because immigrants indeed have chances to socialise with Finnish nationals as well.

I have been a part of the logistics team for 1 and a half years and I can conclude, that the group forming pattern is consistent over the time regardless of the change in the population of groups. The division of the team into two groups that of Finnish nationals and with a foreign background remained stable despite of the fact that a lot of people have left the job and a lot of new co-workers were hired.

5.5 Communication among departments

Before beginning the study I had to know which of the departments usually employ more immigrants than other departments and why. I knew from the interview with HR manager that the most “immigrant” departments are the restaurant and

logistics. The sales, those responsible for communication with customer, those responsible for the design, HR team and safety and security workers have a lot less immigrant workers. As I observed, the reason is three-fold: the requirement of language skills, qualification and how much the profession is related to a customer (the closer a profession is to a customer, the lower is the number of immigrants working there). In fact, those are my own assumptions on the basis of what I know about the staff of this store. Due to the fact that I could not say that this information is full and trustworthy, I decided to ask about it the Head of HR team Henna. Thus one of the interview questions was which departments commonly have more immigrant workers than others and what are the bases for that recruitment peculiarity. Her answer mentioned only the language requirement as the central reason for the different number of immigrant workers in departments.

One of the objectives of this paper is to find out how the immigrants communicate with Finnish workers and this section is seeking to contribute to finding an answer to it by studying the communication among departments. By outlining the communication difficulties among the departments I will emphasise the distinctiveness of the immigrants' position in the corporation.

The issue of distance between departments of the personnel has minor significance in this paper and was not studied extensively, although, it has to be touched upon to disclose the topic of the communication of immigrants and Finns.

To start, I should indicate that all the departments wear different kind of uniforms. But the hierarchy inside each of the departments is not emphasised by the uniform which means that the whole department with all the workers and managers wear the same uniform. This helps workers to recognise which department is another worker from as well as puts them apart from each other. When I asked the HR manager about what role the different uniform plays, she said at the interview that it is mostly done for the customer to direct them whom they can approach. When they see an appropriate colour, they understand that there "is a service person, who can help them with shopping", to quote the interview. This answer states, that the differentiation of the personnel by the uniform is a sort of inevitable thing in business but, I assume, that different uniform can play a certain role in separating the departments from each other.

To observe how different departments communicate with each other I used the staff restaurant as a place where people spend their breaks and can talk in informal atmosphere. This site perfectly matches the observation of departments' interrelations because it is a place where all of them intersect and have chance to communicate. The working process, on the contrary, does not allow all the departments meet with each other, for instance, the specialists of logistics that work in the office rarely meets a sales person or a security guard, who work elsewhere and do not have a need to discuss a work-related issue with them.

I observed the group forming patterns and communication among departments by sitting in the staff restaurant and making notes of what I see. I did it at the time when all the departments are at work: the logistics that work in the early mornings are still there, and all other workers with standard working shift have already come (it was from 8:20 to 10:20 am). I also drew a picture of the sitting pattern during one of the observations to use it as a data for this section to better illustrate my definitions.

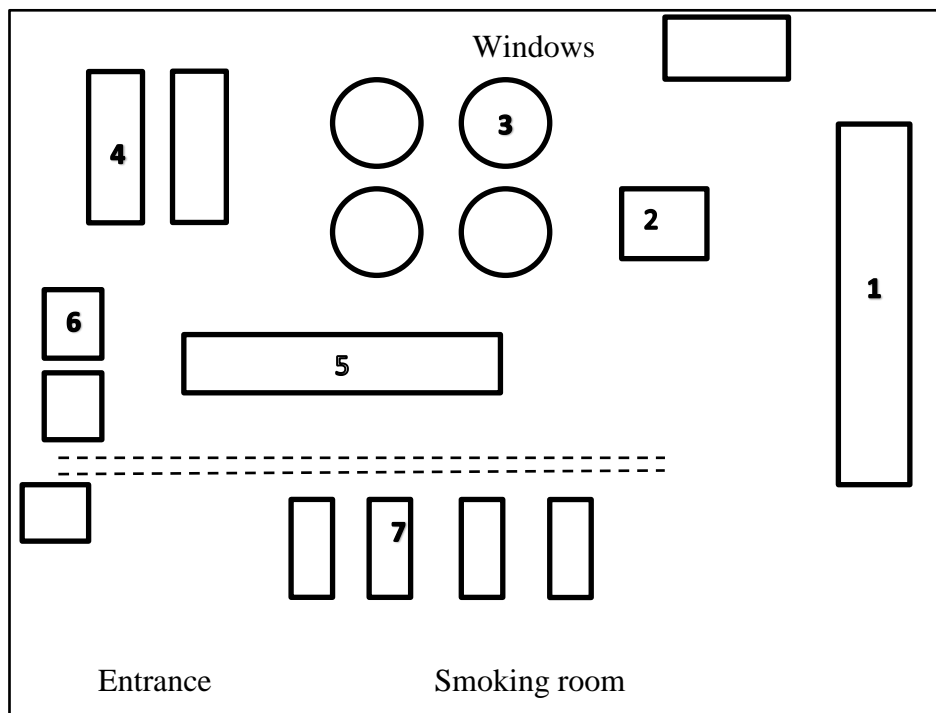
Firstly, the restaurant is quite big, it can accommodate 50-80 people sitting and it has many separated seats. Workers of the departments other than logistics usually have breaks at different times, especially sales, because there always has to be someone working in the department for customers. This makes the situation of making groups at appropriate tables almost impossible. Hence, workers are commonly coming to the canteen alone or with one colleague.

Some workers were coming to the canteen and saying hello to other colleagues from other departments and anyway chose a sit far from them. I have seen many times also that one sales or office worker has come to have a breakfast or lunch, noticed somebody that they knew and had a brief dialog, such as "Hi, how are you? - Hi, I'm good, and you? - all good", after which they anyway chose another sit not to continue this dialog. This means that those employees know each other because they sometimes communicate the work matters, but in more informal atmosphere they decide not to talk and just sit alone.

The most striking result of the restaurant observations is that I have rarely seen workers from different departments sitting and engaging in conversation with each other. Furthermore, they as a rule choose sits as far from each other as possible (see picture 2 and appendix 2). The warehouse part of logistics always chooses the most

detached and most comfortable places at the sofas near the smoking room. Department responsible for the communication and design usually locate in the centre of the canteen (rectangle shape table in a vertical position), and the replenishment team is always at the same tables close to the window and where the food is taken. All the others are choosing the tables accidentally, without system, just the places that are available.

Picture 2. The restaurant scheme



1 - Buffet table; 2 - Bread table; 3 - Replenishment team; 4 - Communication and Design; 5 - Sales co-workers; 6 - Cleaners; 7 - Logistics-warehouse (sofa area).

Of course here I cannot estimate the social distance among departments of that store, on the contrary, I can observe only the physical distance and I can also conclude that this sort of distance indicates the lack of communication. When a worker takes a sit aside from others, I have never seen him interacting with anybody else apart from saying hello; this happens due to the fact that it is just not convenient to talk loudly with somebody sitting far from you. In other words, once an employee has taken a sit far from other department colleagues, he has made a decision not to communicate with them.

This lack of communication takes place regardless of the amount of the communication the departments are involved in concerning the work related issues. For instance, the sales and logistics communicate at work quite a lot about the sales locations that are changing and other work matters however they very rarely have extensive conversations in the restaurant.

Another important fact that I have observed is that when one is coming to the canteen and he sees somebody from the same department, they often join them instead of other departments. All those groups communicate in Finnish language, which makes the logistics department the only one which uses English permanently. The observation of communication among the departments in the staff restaurant provided little information, however, this information was enough to say that in informal atmosphere during the break departments interact scarcely with each other regardless of the fact that some individuals know each other well and communicate at work.

In fact, this result shows that there is not only a difficulty of communication inside the replenishment part of logistics, where the groups are divided on English and Finnish speaking people, but there is also little communication among the departments. Those tendencies keep the immigrant affiliation of workers detached and separated from the Finnish part of the same department as well as from the other Finnish speaking departments.

6 Discussion and conclusion

This research started with an inquiry of how integration proceeds after the start of employment. It was answered through two more specialised questions: in what context the integration takes place? How immigrants and native employees communicate with each other at the workplace?

Studying the context of the immigrant integration, I discovered that the logistics department employees and especially immigrants are living in a constant struggle to increase the income through multiple channels that eliminates the opportunity to plan their future. Getting to know the amount of work that has to be done at appropriate day just two days in advance creates an “always available” perspective that requires immigrants to be highly flexible and ready to accept any chance to work more in expense of own plans. Completing more working hours than it is determined by the contract significantly reduce the benefits such as holiday money and a sick leave. The central reason for those problems is the structure of the corporation and exactly this department that includes only part-time co-workers and a full-time manager. Being at the periphery of the corporation, the insecurity of income is very evident as the number of working shifts varies significantly in accordance with the fluctuations of the store sales, regardless of the contractual hours, co-workers wishes and hopes. This unpredictable and risky position is undermined with the welfare system being exclusive in essence and with the immigration controls that are providing the bases for the differentiation of immigrants depending on their residency status.

Investigating the last question it was found that the communication between immigrants and Finns is structured by the iterative group formation process. This interactional pattern represents the existence of a social boundary that is maintained and reinforced by the actors themselves. The use of language is a method to render the interaction structured that has been discussed in the research. Those Finnish workers who do not want to switch language while communicating to a foreign person persist and maintain the ethnic boundary (and the other way round). For instance, if a foreign worker is willing to join a group of Finnish-speaking nationals he must be able to carry on the conversation in the language of the group. If he joins another group regardless of his Finnish language skills, then it was noticed that the further conversation is either limited to a certain amount of topics, or an immigrant becomes seemingly outsider of

that group. All the observed methods of doing distance illustrate that the boundaries have exclusive nature. The existence of the boundary was substantiated by the fact that employees can both ascribe themselves to certain group and identify others as ascribed or not ascribed to the same group. Moreover, even being conditional and not total, the territorial division of those groups takes place in a logistics team in a sense that foreign and Finnish nationals have their own group localisation.

Immigrant employees having communication difficulties with Finnish nationals within the department as well as with other departments have a detached and segregated position in the N. Corporation. In the context of economic and social vulnerability the full legal, economic, social and cultural participation in the society of the country could hardly be achieved. Opening this predicament of immigrants, this research brings up the problem of the obstacles to their successful integration.

As a result of this research, several recommendations for the N. Corporation were elaborated to improve the communication of the personnel and to stabilise the immigrant position. Different methods of diversity management can be utilised by the human resource manager. As I mentioned in the 5 chapter, the uniforms of managers and co-workers of the same department are similar. This helps to reduce the impact of hierarchical structure on the communication inside department. Thus, to reduce the social distance among departments of the company, the difference between their uniforms should be eliminated or made less apparent. For instance, the collar colour can represent belonging to appropriate department, but not the colour of the whole T-shirt.

Another suggestion is that the N. Corporation should consider changing the structure of the logistics department in order to decrease the number of part-timers. Reducing the channels to working time extension would diminish the flexibility requirement for the employees and stabilise their income.

6.1 Results of theorisation

This research adheres to the principles of the grounded theory approach, as the literature was reviewed at the later stages of the research, the concepts were formed only inductively from the data. The theoretical sampling was accomplished to reduce the amount of the data and the comparative research strategy was used. The central research practices such as coding, analysis, research designing, data gathering,

theoretical categorisation and writing (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were all organised in a cyclic manner. I used diverse sources of data to verify and compare the results of analysis to substantiate my arguments. The theoretical concepts used to name the observed evidences were not adopted from the previous research but were applied with certain reorientation of their meaning. For instance, the concept of “doing distance” taken from the study of Wieder (1974) did change its initial sense. During the fieldwork, the concept of “distancing” appeared often enough to become a category. It was used in different phrases such as “making distance” or “creating distance” or just “distancing from others”. Ultimately, I decided to apply the notion of doing distance as it was already used in literature and perfectly suited for the gathered data. The original meaning of it is very close to the entire isolation of one group from another, yet this in paper this concept was sort of mixed with the Barth’s concept of boundary making (Barth, 1969) to entitle it with a specific interpretation that fits the case. For this research, the concept of doing distance consists of patterns of behaviour directed on separation of one national-linguistic group from another and of gathering together with a certain group that altogether draw a boundary between them, but not isolate them entirely.

The concept of immigrant employee precarity has got a specific meaning as well. It commonly embraces a wide variety of characteristics such as economic vulnerability represented in informal or illegal and temporary labour; lack of state protection; unpredictability of the future; social vulnerability. To render this wide concept analysable I discuss all the significant aspects of migrant precarity that have been observed separately and compare those multiple sides together. Thus, the concept is wholly derived from the data and by breaking up and dividing I made it more analytically precise. In this paper, the concept of precarity as a state of immigrant employees has certain characteristics: part-time, atypical form of employment is a primary and most significant basis for the precariousness of immigrants position; future planning difficulties is an aspect of immigrant precarity; multiple data sources provided an information that the struggling for more work is an attribute of migrant vulnerable position; the sharp variation and instability of income is another aspect of it; limited access to social and welfare benefits as well as to the labour market are also elements of immigrant employees precariousness. All those characteristics were not based on the

academic literature but they have been formulated as categories that united codes of observational fieldnotes. Being inductively developed from data this particular interpretation of migrant precariousness does not fully match with the understanding of it by Rodgers and Rodgers (1989), or Bridget Anderson (2010), or Schierup and Jørgensen (2016) that were discussed in the theoretical chapter. The struggles for more working shifts and “always available” perspective as elements of migrant precariousness were not included in the concept in those studies. The characterisation of the precarious migrant labour as illegal or undocumented is, on the contrary, often mentioned in literature. However, most aspects of the phenomenon observed in N. Corporation correspond to the understanding of migrant precariousness by the above mentioned authors.

Of course, this paper does not represent a case of “pure” Grounded Theory based research, as I use the concepts from academic literature and not develop an entirely new theory. The Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasise that in this case the new theoretical findings are to be compared to the theories that already exist, which was accomplished in this paper. Bryant and Charmaz (2010, p. 154) argue that the key difference of the grounded theory approach from the generic qualitative approach is that all the theoretical findings are derived from the data. The literature can be used for the comparison, but it is essential that the resulting theory is developed inductively rather than being validated by theory. In this paper, I tried to follow those advices and the pre-existent concepts that had been compared to those from data as a result acquired new interpretations.

This study is aimed to fill the gap in social sciences scholarship that is in the area of qualitative research of immigrant integration at the workplace. Occupation, being a very influential integration factor, is very often taken for granted as such. Especially in Finland, the studies of how the immigrants proceed to assimilate at their workplace are very scarce, as the immigrants in legal sources are assumed to be integrated when they find employment. The results of this research draw attention to the problem that the immigrant incorporation into the society is a very complex process that is complicated by many legal, economic and social contextual issues. Even having a job, the economic participation cannot be called full due to the poor conditions of their employment. Immigrants struggle to render their position somehow more stable by

being very flexible and doing overtime work. Apart from that, the communication difficulties are not eliminated, as the boundaries are made at the workplace, which illustrates the poor social participation. According to Heikkilä (2005, p. 486) successful integration is indicated by the rights of immigrants being comparable to those of natives. In this paper it was shown that immigrants may have very limited or no access to welfare resources.

Many studies of immigrant integration measure it simply viewing the outcome, mainly looking at the socio-economic status, the education level and employment (Crul & Schneider, 2010, p. 1263). If such a framework was used for this research, the results would be drastically different. The majority of foreign research participants speak local language fairly well and have a job, even though a part-time. This study aims to go beyond this specification, and assumes this approach to be insufficient for full understanding of the phenomenon. Crul and Schneider (2010, pp. 1261–1263) compared the local and national belonging of second-generation Moroccans in three different cities. They found out that the citizenship status does not determine the identity and belonging significantly. The integrational context was shown to have a major part in this relation. Similarly to this study, the results of my research show the significance of context in the research of immigrant integration. Immigrants are shown to be segregated and have communication difficulties, have precarious state in economic sense, and limited access to welfare resources. Hence, the language proficiency as well as the employment status analysis would not describe the level of their integration even partly. From here I claim that the process of immigrant integration is multidimensional phenomenon that should be studied in social sciences in relation to its context. In this study, I view the legal regulation context, conditions of employment, and the context of existing boundaries that altogether help to describe immigrant integration with much more insight and detail.

What is more, these theoretical results have certain policy implication, which means that the authorities should consider that the employment cannot be the ultimate objective of the governmental integration programmes and policies. Such definition of the integration is very narrow and I am claiming that it should be viewed as multidimensional and complex phenomenon that is largely determined by its context. Contributing to immigrants' participation level in all its economic, legal, social and

cultural dimensions should be the orientation immigrant integration policy. Moreover, the immigration law instead of differentiating the immigrants on the basis of residency and occupation status should create the bases for equal access to the welfare benefits and labour market.

6.2 Similar findings in literature

The theoretical conceptualisation in this research is grounded in the collected data, not in the previous research, however, similar themes have been observed in other studies in Finland as well, yet in different contexts. For instance, considering the precarity issue, in the study of young Russian women in the Helsinki area (Krivonos, 2016) the immigration controls have been viewed to determine their access to the labour market. Immigrants need to have a job to stay in the country and as a consequence they find themselves largely dependent on their employers. Such labour conditions are characterised by the high legal vulnerability, immobility, high flexibility requirement and income insecurity.

Lauren Martin (2017) in the research of outsourced labour recruitment viewed working positions that require high international mobility, such as Finnish airline company Finnair workers, berry-pickers and university researchers. The results showed the border controls create unequal legal protection of foreign and Finnish workers. The requirement of renewing the residence permit undermines the security of their position and makes them dependent on the employer, which creates the long-term precarity of immigrants' status.

There was a study on precarity of student and humanitarian immigrants that are employed at the low skilled positions, such as cleaners and dish-washers (Könönen, 2012). Similarly to my study of logistics workers, it showed that those immigrants have high flexibility requirement of work and uncertain income. The type of the residence permit affects the employment relationships limiting the working right and hence making a large part of immigrants immobile. This study also showed that the unclear residence permit situation has a long-term negative effect on immigrants' labour market position.

The topic of task distribution among the immigrant and Finnish employees that was touched in this paper was also observed in the ethnic hierarchies study of care

workers (Lauren & Wrede, 2008). There, the division of the staff on those who can do more valuable tasks and those who are delegated with the “dirty work” (Lauren & Wrede, 2008, p. 23) was noticed. This differentiation was made on the ethnical basis and those who are commonly assigned with the less valuable tasks were immigrants.

Concerning the boundary making literature, there are studies that found similar results about the formation of the groups. In this paper, the group of foreigners is formed of many diverse nationalities whilst Finnish group is always mono-national. This differentiation represents the situation observed in the study of L. Huttunen (2009, as cited in Haikkola, 2011, p. 158) that the boundary between the local majority and immigrants is not always made in relation to appropriate ethnicity. Alternatively, the new negative and quite blurred category of “immigrant” emerges that encompasses many nationalities. Lotta Haikkola (2011) study of migrant second generation showed that there has been “created an interethnic, collective identity” (Haikkola, 2011, p. 158) and relative to it boundary was created between the young people with a foreign background and Finns. In the case of N. Corporation no negativity over the concept “immigrant” is implicated, however, the similar grouping was observed, that is not regarding the national or ethnic origin but simply differentiating Finns and others.

In the field of ethnic minority integration there was a research connected to the leisure activities of youth (Kivijärvi, 2015) that was also studying the group formation processes. It was found that the social gathering in youth clubs may be internally divided. A. Kivijärvi states that according to his observations, the peer affiliations are ethnically determined. Ethnicity is seen as the major but not the only factor contributing to the boundaries, as the social class and gender are also highly influential. Dichotomous peer circles often include many minorities together that are culturally, religiously and ethnically diverse. Findings show that such division constitutes a representation of position of “others” in Finnish society shared by the group members. (Kivijärvi, 2015, pp. 178–182.)

6.3 Further research

During the research a lot of very interesting themes were raised that were not in the area of my primary focus. Being a part of the logistics team, some of my colleagues became friends to me so they even entrusted me with sensitive information about their

lives. One of the foreigners, let's say, Peter, once got a negative answer to the residence permit on the basis of work while being employed in N. Corporation. Finnish Immigration Service on the basis of TE-toimisto (Employment and Economic Development Office) decision rejected an application. Peter quoted that the reason that was mentioned in the official papers that he received is: "the unemployment rate among Finns at this branch of the labour market". This means that the high unemployment rate in the area of logistics among Finnish citizens was the reason not to grant the residence permit to a foreigner who is already employed permanently for about 2 years having sufficient income to live in this country. After this negative decision Peter's permanent work contract was terminated. In accordance with the immigration law (Ulkomaalaislaki 1218/2013, §73), the employer has to firstly ensure the availability of the Finnish workforce at the labour market and only secondly employ foreigners. Knowing that Peter was employed under a permanent work contract which provided, according to the law, sufficient means of support, the situation that he must leave the job and country when he already is an experienced co-worker is rather shocking. I did not plan to discuss the inconsistency of the Immigration law in this paper, however, this situation opens up a topic for further research. The racialized nature of the immigration controls could be studied at such workplace setting, yet with a different methodology. Gathering narrative interviews would be more appropriate here.

Another topic that was mentioned in the chapter that discussed precariousness of immigrant position could later be opened wider. I concluded that the structure of the corporation is built to transfer all the risks of business into the back of employees. The employer is secured from the unpredictability of the market sales in a way that part-time workers having the income sharply varied face those risks instead. Nowadays, the contracts with inexact hours, such as zero-hour contracts are becoming more and more widespread (Lopes & Dewan, 2014). The case of N. Corporation provides an example of not zero-hour (10 or 20) but those kinds of contracts that do not ensure a definite number of shifts and hence a stable salary. This employment system as well as this mode of risk management can also be studied in further research as two intertwined phenomena.

The boundary making process is assumed in this paper to create an obstacle to the integration of immigrants. Though, this is a two-sided point that could be studied

more thoroughly with a focus on how this group formation process influences the integration of immigrants. On the one hand, this interactional pattern seemingly decreases the number of contacts of immigrants with Finns that certainly does not contribute to their integration especially in terms of learning the local language. On the other hand, the opportunity to form networks with other foreigners may facilitate the integration into the country of their settlement. The fact that getting integrated within the ethnic community or within the community of immigrants of other nationality can significantly contribute to the immigrant integration into the country in general is well known (Breton, 1964). The topic of group formation was not analysed in this sense, and the variety of its impact on the integration would be a possible further continuation for this study.

Being a single-case study, this research can be generalised to other multinational corporations, particularly those who employ part-time manual immigrant workers. Every case should be considered individually, as the corporate structure and culture can have a significant influence of immigrants' interaction with Finnish nationals, however, I am stating that those problems go beyond the specificity of this particular case.

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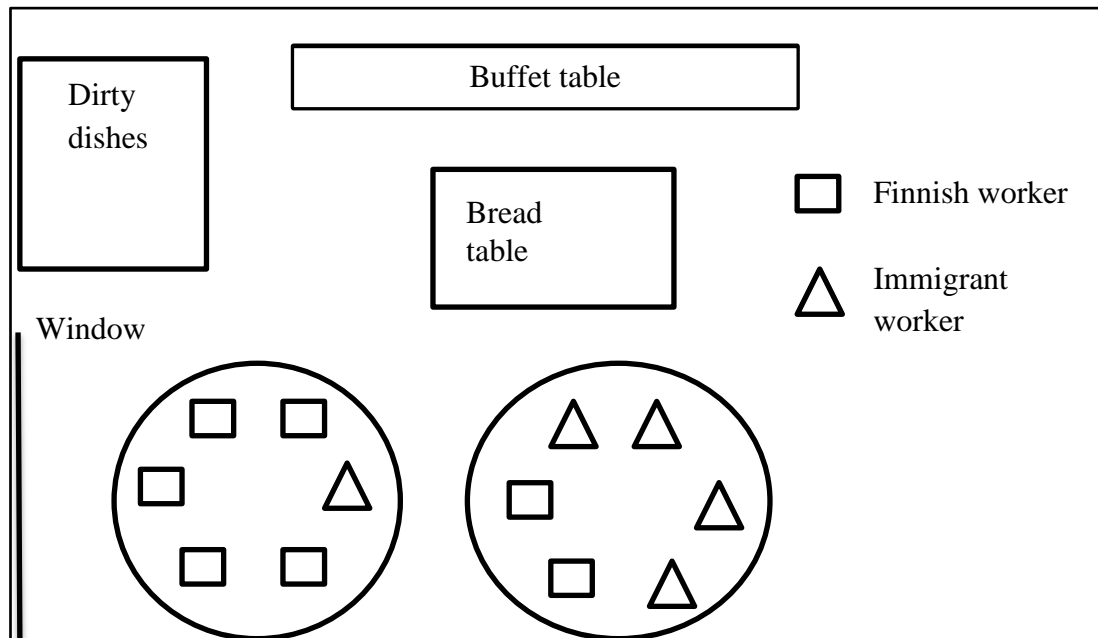
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Appendixes

Appendix 1. Sitting scheme with of table switching situation



Appendix 2. Drawing of the staff canteen scheme from the fieldnotes

